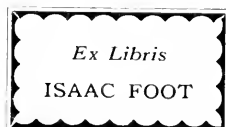




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POLITICAL ESSAYS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SOUTH AFRICA

**A GLANCE AT CURRENT CONDITIONS
AND POLITICS**

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ESSAYS
CRITICAL AND POLITICAL

VOL. II

POLITICAL

BY

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AUTHOR OF "SOUTH AFRICA: A GLANCE AT
CURRENT CONDITIONS AND POLITICS,"
"THE NEW FISCAL POLICY," ETC.

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PREFACE

MANY of the essays in this volume were written and published a good many years ago. Much has altered since they were written, and the views then expressed might have to be modified if the essays had to be rewritten to-day. But the opinions were held when the words were written, and although a resurrection of dead essays may seem a foolish experiment, there is enough of interest in some of them to make the experiment worthy of a trial. I have in no case tried to bring the essays "up to date," but have reprinted them as they were published in these years, now too far away. I have to thank the editor of the *National Review* for his permission to reproduce in this volume an essay recently published in that journal.

November 1906.

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POLITICAL ESSAYS

I

OUR COLONIAL EMPIRE¹

WE think that none of those who argue in favour of the separation of England from her colonies have called in question the advantages of colonisation. At one time the inexpediency of allowing labour to leave the country was argued, but the doubts which at that time existed have long ago been set at rest. It has over and over again been proved that the colonisation of uninhabited or only partially inhabited lands is not only an economic advantage to the over-peopled state from which the emigrants go, and to the under-peopled country to which they are carried, but that the question has a much larger aspect than that of simply balancing the labour-markets of the world. It is a benefit to the whole world that commodities should be produced under the most favourable conditions, and this important contribution to the prosperity of mankind can only be secured by means of colonisation. All this has been agreed upon, and is no longer a question in dispute. It has, however, an important connection with the subject which we have here in hand, and that is the future relations between Britain and her colonies. We have had some heroic policy lately, and Mr. Disraeli, in defend-

¹ "Our Colonial Empire." An Address delivered by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., to the Members of the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, on the 5th November 1875.

ing that policy in the House of Commons upon a very recent occasion, made use of some very brave words. In concluding his speech upon the Suez Canal on February 21st, he said—"They (the people of England) are sea-sick of the Silver Streak. They want the empire to be maintained, to be strengthened; they will not be alarmed even if it be increased."

Now if this is the temper of England at the present time, it may not be inopportune to inquire what are the grounds of these sentiments—are they rational or not, is our colonial empire worth preserving or increasing, or would England be very much better off if she was content to curtail her sprawling proportions, and entrench herself behind the "silver streak," of which, according to the Prime Minister, her people are sea-sick? These questions have been much discussed in recent times, and Mr. Forster's contribution to the subject is in many ways the most notable which has been made. The question of the future relations of England and her colonies must not, however, be looked at altogether apart from the question of colonisation to which we have referred. This is not the place to speak at any length of the advantages to be derived from emigration. These, as we said, are many and important; but there is one aspect in which the question of colonisation is pertinently connected with that which we have here undertaken to treat, viz., the continued association of England and her dependencies under one rule, and as friendly parts of a great and peaceful empire.

If Government undertakes this work of colonisation, it is necessary that there should be some understanding as to the policy of the mother-country in relation to her colonies. The duties of Old England to these New Englands which she is planting must be accurately defined and thoroughly understood, otherwise men will not leave the old country. If colonies are to be cast off whenever it is suggested that the existing connection

with the mother-country might in the event of war be made a means of wounding the latter through the spoliation of the former; if colonies are to go free whenever England enters into a war which might possibly involve the dependent state in the struggle; if separation is to take place whenever England ceases to derive direct benefit from the connection, or ceases to exercise direct rule over the colony, then it is necessary that this policy should be clearly understood. One of the great temptations at the present time to colonisation is that the laws of England accompany and protect the colonist. Without that protection colonies could not have been formed. If that protection is liable at any instant, and on any selfish pretext, to be withdrawn; if the colonist is to be left at any instant to frame laws, find governments, and raise armies; if the support and sympathy of England are to be withdrawn upon the merest suggestion that the relation between the two countries is a barren bargain, then one of the main inducements to colonial emigration will cease to operate. This is a somewhat different argument from that which was advanced some years ago by Mr. Merevale. He argued that colonies are valuable as a field for emigration. This theory has been questioned, because emigration returns give no evidence of the preference of those who emigrate for countries under British rule.² But although the returns of emigration might afford the materials for a comparison between the numbers going in a certain number of years to Canada, Australia, or the United States, and although the results of that comparison might show that there was no preference for the former over the latter, still we cannot doubt that the announcement of the fact that England was ready

¹ Paper on "The Utility of Colonisation," read before the British Association, 1862.

² See Essay on Colonial Government, by Professor Cairns. "Political Essays." London, 1873.

and willing to set free all her colonies would do much to hinder colonisation, properly so called. The protection of England to colonies which have become states with many millions of inhabitants may be a small thing ; but the protection which she affords her pioneer-subjects, who go and found colonies in the heart of hidden lands, is a very great thing. If she cast off her colonies, this kind of colonisation would cease ; and it is to be remembered that the United States no longer afford the inducements to immigrants that they formerly did. Indeed, in America the opinion is that the tide has turned.

But however that may be, there is a necessity for examining this question of our colonial empire somewhat thoroughly, and we are much assisted in this essay by Mr. Forster's admirable address, and by a remarkably able paper upon this subject which appeared in the pages of the *Westminster Review* in 1852, and which was republished in 1870.

We have seen that individuals were at one time kept in unity by force ; but we have also pointed out that the necessity for such stringency of government has passed away, and that men are associated in a no less coherent and stable state by the community of their sentiments, their thoughts, and their interests. But a similar policy is applicable to the relationship between this country and her colonies. A little less than a century ago we attempted to coerce one of our most promising colonies, and failed. The question which led to the separation of England and the United States was whether it was a principle of government that taxation without representation was inadmissible. It has been well pointed out that the principle involved in the War of Independence was scarcely whether taxation was only just where representation had been conceded, but whether the £240,000,000 which had been spent by England in the defence of her American

colonies from the French invasions from Canada should not, in some measure, be borne by the colonies in whose interests the war had been undertaken, and for whose benefit the struggle had been prosecuted to a successful issue. Be the justice of that war where it may, it cannot but be a warning to us, in its incidents and in its results, of the difficulty of governing colonies by armies, and of the necessity for another principle in the regulation of our colonial dependencies than that of force. Just as we saw that the necessity for coercion had diminished in our state relations to individuals—just as we saw that the molecular forces of society were instrumental in binding the various elements of a state together in a harmonious whole, without the exercise of tyranny, so we shall find that there are large forces at work between English-speaking and English-thinking peoples which may in the same way bind countries together in a friendly compact—which may, notwithstanding the sprawling nature of our dependencies, make a complete and compact unity of the English people.

As the freedom of men becomes greater, we look forward to a greater homogeneity of the citizenship of this country; as the dependencies of Britain become more and more free to exercise their own will, we shall find that they are more one with us in opinion and sentiment, and that they are united to us in a bond more indissoluble than any Acts of Parliament—in the strong and lasting bond of a rational choice.

But to view this question properly, we must endeavour to appreciate the arguments of those who look forward to a time when the colonies will cease to be dependencies of England, and who regard the separation which they anticipate as one of the happiest things which could happen both for the parent and the offspring states. We agree with Mr. Forster, that if England and her colonies do their mutual duties,

that time need never come ; and we cannot but think that it will be well not only for England and for the colonies, but for the whole world, that it never should. Mr. Forster rightly says that the question which has to be decided is, which of these two ideas will prevail ? Mr. Forster is one of those few statesmen who have a philosophical conception of what politics mean. Many of our politicians are somewhat hand-to-mouth with their politics. They have principles for the nonce, and every new action upon their part is a compromise between their own past and the exigencies of the present. Mr. Forster, however, shows what a conscience is in politics, and it is a conscience which is an umpire of rational experience and thought, and not of irrational whim or prejudiced feeling. His remark as to the basal motions of action is valuable. What we require from men like Mr. Forster is more than a glib exposition of the case-law of politics ; we expect a disquisition upon the principles upon which all politics are founded. His reference to the realisation of ideas is instructive ; not as being in any sense new, but as being in every sense very true, and as showing the foundation of all political creeds. It is very true that the future of England is in the heads of men just now, and by examining the ideas of to-day we may well foretell the action of to-morrow. If you could but read the thoughts of men, you could prophesy. But we cannot say that that portion of Mr. Forster's address in which he inquires which of these two ideas will prevail is altogether satisfactory. We have already said that we thoroughly agree with him in so far as his conclusions are concerned ; but we think that these results might have been more amply illustrated—might have been more convincingly urged by means of more definite arguments than those which Mr. Forster adduces. His whole thesis has to do with the future of England and her colonies ; and yet he

constantly, in support of his argument that that relation will continue, asserts that the future is too dark to admit of our founding arguments upon it. But this argument would, with more force, have been a reason for refusing to deal with the question at all; it is not a reason for shirking the consideration of possibilities, when he has undertaken to treat of a subject which is not at the present time raised as a practical question. Again, when he has to say what the future relation between England and her colonies will be, he only answers that he cannot say. We confess that this method of treating this paramount question does not satisfy us. We should have had no reason to complain of such vagueness if we had been criticising a popular lecture; but when we are face to face with the grave and considered utterances of such a man and statesman as Mr. Forster, we think we have a right to complain.

Very little requires to be said with reference to the statistics of the colonies. They are referred to by Mr. Forster, and are to be found in many accessible works of reference; still, one or two facts must be borne in mind. The colonies concerning which the question of separation or federation is most frequently discussed are those dependencies of the Crown¹ which have resulted from emigration. There are three distinct kinds of dependencies—(1) those which are held as coigns of vantage in relation to our commerce, or in relation to our peaceful or embroiled foreign relations; (2) those over which we rule by right of conquest, and in which the inhabitants are under British rule, although not of our own race; and (3) those which have resulted in the first instance from emigration to an uninhabited, or nearly uninhabited, country—those colonies in which English,

¹ Essay on the "Government of Dependencies." By G. C. Lewis, Esq., 1841, p. 170.

Scotch, and Irish men and women are resident. The last description of colony constitutes the colonial empire with which Mr. Forster deals. As to the stronghold-colonies of England, no one proposes that they should be abandoned ; and we have the authority of Mr. Disraeli for saying, that in so far as these are in the Mediterranean, England never will relinquish them.¹ As to the possession of our subject states, it is surely certain that England has no intention of parting with these. It is not doubted that the expense of our subject-empire is great. We know that much of the expensive policy of England is connected with our possession of India. Only the other day we paid £4,000,000 to keep open the road to our Eastern Empire, and now we contemplate adding another title to that of our English Queen. The Eastern Question is not yet at rest, and half of our foreign policy of to-day has to do with our fears and jealousies in reference to India. Yet while public opinion is thus definite as to the retention of these, there seems to be some thought of a separation from our colonies proper. While we keep the trophies of war, we are ready to throw away the badges and the conquests of peace. Nay, while we keep what is the envy of the world, while we keep what has been a battlefield in the past, and may be a firebrand between nations in the future, we are ready, according to some writers, to separate from those children-states whose union with ourselves is the pledge and guarantee of peace.

In reference to these colonies, then, in relation to which separation is in some quarters in contemplation, one point is to be noted, and that is, that they almost all lie in the temperate regions of the earth. Climates have placed somewhat narrow bounds to our colonisation, yet altogether the territory occupied by these our colonies in the two temperates of the earth amounts

¹ See speech on the motion for the address (*Times*, 9th February 1876).

to about 4,000,000 square miles ; and if we add the area of the United Kingdom and British India to that figure, it will be found that England rules about one-eighth of the whole land-surface of the globe.

The population of our colonies proper amounts to close upon 7,000,000, and the rate of increase is so great, that Mr. Forster's calculation that the population in eighty-four years' time may well amount to 82,000,000, is certainly not a strained inference. It is this great nation from which we are asked to separate ourselves, and the arguments which are urged in favour of this course are these :—

1. It is said that no real connection between England and her colonies any longer exists. We have given up the right to tax our colonies. We have long ceased to regulate the commerce of our dependencies. They now regulate their own trade, and have in some instances, in defiance of English policy and advice, had recourse to protective tariffs. We can no longer disgrace them by making them the recipients of our outcast criminals. They are only nominally dependencies of England, and the Secretary for the Colonies has no power in reference to their internal legislation, and has even been disregarded in relation to several important intercolonial questions. Why then, it is asked, should we continue in name what does not exist in fact ?

2. It is argued that the loss of our colonies would be a gain to our purses. It is said that there can be no reason why the inhabitants of these islands, already overburdened with the cost of pauperism, insanity, and other evils, should pay several millions per annum direct to the colonies, and be put to immense indirect expenses for fleets which protect them, for armies which, but for them, might be reduced in numbers, for diplomatic and consular services which they ought to supply themselves. There is also a geographical

and physiological argument sometimes urged against the permanency of our friendly and national relations with the colonies. It is said that like laws and like governments are for like men, and that is true. But do our colonists differ in any way from their fellows in this country? Have the different circumstances to which they have been exposed changed them so much as to dissociate them in psychological fact from us? If that question were answered in the affirmative, permanent association in political union might well be despaired of. But the question must be answered in the negative. We pointed out that climates had limited the spread of our colonies. Our emigrants have gone to countries like to those which they have left. The old names seem no misnomers in these new countries. The conditions of life vary very little in Canada, in New Zealand, in Australia, or at the Cape, from those in our own country; and the fact remains that an Australian is as like an Englishman, and will pass as current amongst people born in Britain, as their sovereigns do amongst our own. As to the geographical argument, it is each year becoming more obsolete. We laugh at distance! Australia is not so far off now as John-o'-Groats was a century ago. Swift steamers and ocean-cables make Melbourne as near to us as Dublin. It is too late, when we can transmit men by steam and messages by electricity, to urge that distance is a bar to government.

3. That they are apt to be the causes of war, and would be weaknesses in time of war.¹ That we undertake their protection, and that we should be unable to protect them. Canada could not be protected from the United States. The other colonies are not threatened; and if they were, as they might be, by a country which

¹ "Extended empire, like expanded gold,
Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendour."

JOHNSON.

desired to inflict an indirect wound upon England, we should be unable to do anything to prevent the outrage which our so-called protectorate had brought about.

4. Then it is argued that the colonies would gain by being loosened from the apron-string of England; that they would increase in independence, strength, wealth, and prosperity by being made to stand alone; and that a nation cannot do well and wisely until it is bearing its own responsibilities.¹

With reference to these arguments, we are glad to say that Mr. Forster has shown that the pocket-argument is groundless. The whole of the direct cost of the colonies was last year under £400,000, and a considerable portion of that sum was incurred for countervailing advantages derived by this country from the colonies, and was in the nature of payment, not of gift. As for the indirect expenditure on the colonies, that, too, has been exaggerated. Our armies are not large because of the colonies, our fleets are large because of our fleets of commerce. We have floating colonies which we cannot repudiate; and we must protect these, for on these our greatness and prosperity depend. The expenses of our consular and diplomatic services would be quite as great, and the expenses of our Privy Council—which is at present the supreme court of appeal from the colonies—would be nearly as great, if the colonies were independent, and we had only to do with our own narrow home and European interests. The argument that the colonies cost much money, then, has little or no weight. Each year the amount they receive from England is diminishing; and even were it much greater than it is, we should be inclined to regard it as money well spent, and not thrown away, when we

¹ See Mr. Goldwin Smith's "The Empire"; Professor Thorold Rogers on "The Colonial Question" in "The Cobden Club Essays," 2nd Series, 1872; and Professor Cairns on "Colonisation and the Colonial Government" in "Political Essays." London, 1873.

look at the great indirect benefits which arise from the association.

Still these considerations were sufficient to lead some very able men to regard the possibility of separation with complacency. We no longer claimed to derive any direct benefits from the colonies. We long ago gave up the right to impose taxes upon them, and so relieve our home taxpayer by a contribution from abroad. Emigration was no doubt of importance, but however much commerce might follow the flag, emigrants did not; and colonies which were strong enough to do without British aid or protection were not likely to tempt emigrants. It is a young and forming country which affords chances to the energetic colonist. It is where man is brought into contact with nature that the want of labour and capital is so poignantly felt; a country as highly civilised as England would no longer tempt the classes of persons which are calculated to be of the greatest use in the colonies. It would be no better than going from Manchester to Liverpool. Then again, as we have seen, there was little or no direct benefit derived by the colony from the association with England. It was saved the expense of a supreme court of appeal and of diplomatic and consular services; and although that is undoubtedly a great thing in the eyes of economists, it is not much in the eyes of those who think that a country can only become strong by bearing its own burdens. It was these considerations, then, which induced certain philosophical politicians to argue that it would be better to break a union which could not directly benefit either the mother-country or the colony—a union which might in many ways cripple both, and which might embroil each in the troubles of the other.

But these arguments overlooked the inestimable indirect advantages which accrued both to England and

her colonies from the relationship which exists between them. With the cowardly argument we have no sympathy. It is true we are on the side of peace; it is true that we hold that this country ought to be ready to make innumerable sacrifices before she goes to war; it is true we see little reason in the arbitrament of arms, and look forward confidently to a time when between civilised nations, as now between cultured men, physical force will be regarded as irrelevant in all disputes—to a time when national wounds will be healed by the application of right, instead of rent open by the cruel fingers of might. Why differences amongst nations should be referred to the lower court of force, while differences amongst men are referred to courts of law and reason, it is impossible to say; but a time will come when the ambition of foolish kings cannot be made a pretext for violence, when nations will blush for their footpad career on the highway of the world, and when governments will be ashamed to be the only unpunished thieves. But we cannot see that there is any ground for separating from the colonies, because they may at some future time bring us, or we may at some future time bring them, into the toils of war. Every relation which exists between this country and any other may in time be the cause of quarrels. Every treaty may lead to a war. But are we on that account to become a self-contained, a hermit nation, as Japan used to be? Are we to refuse all foreign intercourse; are we to shirk all foreign obligations; are we to dock our foreign commerce in case these relations lead us into some troublous war? What would be the result of such a policy? In the first place famine; in the second poverty and weakness, which would invite aggression; and a nation which could not understand its duty in the world—a nation which cumbered the ground in its selfish cowardice—would be razed from the face of the earth. But if this policy were a wise one, who can

say where it should stop? When we had confined our starved enterprise and peddling commerce within these little isles, might we not well consider the advisability of setting Ireland free? That country would without doubt be a thorn in the side of Britain in the event of war. But might not this process go even further? Might not the question of the mutual advantages of England and Scotland remaining in the Union be plausibly debated? Has not the former drawn the latter into distant wars with which it had no concern? It is undoubtedly true that the tendency of our times is to decentralise government, and generally admitted that intimate local government has many advantages over distant and ignorant imperial rule. We know that the five hundred English members who know little about Scotland have it in their power to legislate for that country in spite of the fifty-eight who are informed as to its wants and its necessities. Wherein, then, lies the excellence of the Union? But this argument might be carried still further. Northumberland might wish to be relieved from the consequences of the errors of Middlesex, and we might soon have statesmen arguing that it was a wise thing to go back to the Heptarchy. We cannot, then, see that the possibility of future wars in which we might be embroiled through the acts of our colonies, or in which our colonies might be endangered through the enemies of Britain, is any reason for the separation of these from the founder-country. Indeed, we believe that every argument which is urged for separation, in relation to our colonial dependencies, is equally valid when applied as between Britain and Ireland, or as between England and Scotland. While other nations are "armed camps," we cannot hope to do without armies. When violence was in our streets, even honest men wore swords. A time may come, although we think that time is distant, when war will be forced upon us. If that time should come, we be-

lieve with Mr. Forster that the colonies would rally to our rescue. We cannot see that our continued association with the colonies would be at all likely to endanger them. Mr. Forster points out that Canada is in no peril. The United States have no thought of annexing the Dominion ; and if they had such lawless desires, we believe with Mr. Forster that although there would be for a time "great suffering in Canada, for a time, perhaps, a successful invasion," yet in the end "the four millions of freemen would not be conquered." But instead of causing wars, we look to the federation of all English people as the means to lasting peace. This, to our mind, is one of the great advantages of the continued union between Great Britain and her colonies. The federation of nations is the hope of a millennium. Did separation take place on account of the mutual poltroonery of this country and her sapling colonies, the weakness of each would be a temptation to the land-avarice of other nations. The colonies might be in a position to defend themselves, but they might fail to retain their liberty. Would the world gain by such wars? Would not the dastard peace of England be a fine satisfaction to her under such circumstances? But would not the separation of England from her colonies lead to a separation between these? The paltry ambition of individuals would lead to the disintegration of those states which the supremacy of England at present unites. Would not the inter-relations of the colonies under such circumstances lead to wars which would have all the rancour of family feuds? It is to be remembered that governments are not in themselves good things ; indeed, they are evils like medicine, and the less we have of them the better. The way to minimise governments, the way to economise the expense which these cause, is to integrate, not to disintegrate, nations. The results of giving to each of our colonies a separate government would be calamitous. We have seen what

a divided Europe has achieved in the way of blood. A divided Australia might react that long tragic history. The strifes of each parish—if each were a separate kingdom—are reasons enough for wars, and it is only their subordination to a higher authority which enables them to settle their petty differences without blows. We cannot but think, then, that the separation of England from her colonies would set a bad example to all her colonies. Under English rule we have seen federation achieved in Canada, and we shall hope to see it also attained by our South African colonies. But if these colonies are content to become one for the benefit of the whole, if they appreciate the advantages of united, and the disadvantages of separate existence, surely they will see that the larger federation which their union with England makes possible, the federation of states not geographically near, but ethnographically contiguous, would be an incomparable advantage to the whole human race. If federation between small states which are near each other would be a means of bringing about intercolonial amity, the federation of large states, the solidarity of the English people, would be a means of securing the peace of the world.

But although this of itself would be a sufficient reason for continuing in union with the colonies, and for endeavouring to devise the future relations between the various English-speaking peoples, there are other important indirect benefits derived by both the parties to this contract which must not be overlooked. Mr. Forster has shown conclusively that our commerce follows our flag. As markets in which we buy and sell, our colonies are of the utmost importance, both to the home manufacturer and the home consumer. Whether this fact is to be accounted for by the fact that these colonies are still connected with England, or by the fact that their inhabitants have wants and tastes which English enterprise can supply, and enter-

prise which is parallel with English requirements, it is certain that the more intimate our relations continue to be with our colonies, the more useful shall we become to them as a source of commodities, and the more valuable will they be to us in the free reciprocity of trade. But does not civilisation follow trade? The communion between this country and her colonies is intimately associated with the relations of our markets. Our ships not only carry the products of our looms and our furnaces, but of our printing-presses. Where bales go, there also books find their way. That this communion is of much importance to those nations which are on the outskirts of civilisation cannot be doubted. It is by this means that these armies of industry keep up their communication with the base of operations in England. "There is not," says Professor Rogers, "I believe, an Englishman who does not desire to see the extension of the race, the customs, the language, the literature in which he glories, or who does not rejoice in the fact that this race is growing rapidly on the fairest parts of the civilised world."¹ Is it not, then, of the utmost importance that we should continue to reinforce these armies with our thought, with our sympathy, with our literature, with our culture, with our manners? And these are no light matters, but are of incalculable moral significance to a rough and struggling people. Of these we may use Burke's words. "My hold," he said, "of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as iron." We think that the fact that some of our colonies have gone astray in relation to some questions of commercial policy is a reason rather for the continuance of that close and powerful influence over the colonies which is exerted by those means, than for an abandon-

¹ "The Colonial Question," p. 431.

ment of those communities, which would but serve to confirm them in their error, and inaugurate a long course of evil legislation, which would cripple and injure the colonies and inflict injustice on mankind, and which, with the assistance of our riper experience, should be avoided. These errors, which have resulted from the laxity of our relations with our colonies, might well be corrected in a more intimate confederation of our colonial dependencies.

We cannot agree with those, then, who would have us believe that a relation of interdependence between England and her colonies for the sake of immense indirect benefits may not exist and prosper. It exists and is acquiesced in by men in a country; why not by nations in a commonwealth of countries? These associate themselves together for the mutual benefit to be derived from the association; why should not nations do the same? Why should there not be a club of English-speaking nations? The associations of men are founded upon a community of thought and sentiment. Is there not such a community of ideas and feelings amongst ourselves and our colonial fellow-countrymen as to be the foundation of a close and permanent union between us and them? "Ideas," says Mr. Forster, "are the rulers of the world." They are the bonds or solvents of human societies. Is there not, then, a sufficiency of ideas in common between these our travelled countrymen and ourselves to unite us in one community? Is not the liberty which we have given them as dear to them as it is to us? Is not the vigour and energy and zeal in enterprise, which they have carried hence into better markets, something that they are as proud of as their English fathers? Are we not proud of their prosperity, their strength and wealth? Are they not proud of our achievements in science, in literature, in art? Will they not in time, when they have earned their leisurable class, be bound

closer to us in the common glories of the victories of the brush, the chisel, and the pen, and will they not be glad to trace their literary genealogy from the great men of this our country, and be connected with us more closely in the ties of common truth than in those of kindred blood—"ties which, though light as air, are as strong as iron"?

All this to us, then, seems very certain; and not only very certain, but very hopeful. We look upon the free connection of the future as certain to be more binding than the bond connection of the past. As we saw that men were less one in sentiment, in hopes, in ideas, when they were forced to be one in name, and as the unity of the nation became greater as men became freer—because *men* are not, in reality, free to differ, but only to agree—so we say that nations will in the future make this excellent use of their freedom, and be more united in their liberty than they were in their bondage.

We must touch very lightly on the question which Mr. Forster pretended to leave unanswered. He said, if asked what kind of federation do you propose, he would reply, "I am ready with no proposition." But he certainly did himself an injustice. He afterwards proved that he had some very perspicuous ideas as to the federation of the future. He rightly points out that it is our duty to do our utmost to strengthen and mature our colonies in their social, their political, and commercial relations. In this his advice does not differ from that of politicians of all shades of opinion.¹ He rightly says there must be common allegiance, common nationality, and common political rights. Besides these, there must undoubtedly be mutual relations with all foreign powers, whether at peace or in war. There

¹ See "Colonial Constitutions," by Arthur Mills, M.P., 1856; Pamphlet on the Colonies, by the Right Hon. Sir Charles Adderley, 1862; Speech of Lord Derby (then Lord Stanley) at King's Lynn, *Times*, 20th Oct. 1864.

must be some common principles of action, some common articles of political creed, and some means by which the independent action of each of the colonies may be regulated and conformed to these mutual principles and beliefs, otherwise the union is a sham, and the separation which has been so urgently insisted upon had better take place. That this is not impossible we believe; and we should have desired to hear what Mr. Forster—who speaks not only with the authority of a statesman, but with the greater authority of information respecting some at least of our dependencies—had to say with reference to this matter: here, however, he is silent. He alludes to the Canadian Copyright Act of last year, and regrets that the Dominion Government did not, before it asked the confirmation of that Act by our Parliament, ask whether arrangements could not be made for an imperial copyright. Here, then, we have an apt illustration of the inconvenience of the lax relations which exist between the Home and the Colonial Governments. Mr. Forster says that he does not despair of some future tariff for the empire, and that a tariff based upon our present fiscal policy—namely, “customs levied upon as few articles as possible, with a corresponding excise.” But he does not show us any grounds for his sanguine anticipation. We know that some of the colonies have become protectionist. What reason is there for hope that they will become better informed as to their real duties and interests? What means will they have in the future to correct the error which they were uninformed enough to make in the past? Here also Mr. Forster is not explicit. He admits that there must be one law throughout the empire as to the treatment of uncivilised or half-civilised races. England could not be hand-and-glove with a slave-owning power. But how is this unanimity of action as to this matter to be obtained? We know

that the Secretary for the Colonies has already been defied. Are we then to acquiesce in the separation of any state which chooses to set at defiance not only the advice and example of England, but a higher law of nature and humanity, and begins to exercise rights of property in man? Are we to regard such a state as free to do as it likes? Are we to give up the cause of liberty, and abandon those who are unable to wrest their freedom from their rulers to their fate? Are we simply to wash our hands, Pilate-wise, and say that we are guiltless of the blood of these? Should not such a state be treated by the other members of the confederation as a criminal is treated by the great body of honest men? Should not such a member of the union be denied the right to secede until it has rehabilitated itself in the eyes of all just men; and should not England and the other untainted colonies do as the Northern States of the American Union did in the civil war, and rise to crush an injustice which makes the horrors of war themselves seem mercies in the haggard comparison? Upon such questions Mr. Forster is not explicit. He would admit, we suppose, that the confederation should have certain laws, but he does not indicate the means by which these could be achieved. Almost every politician has long ago abandoned the idea of allowing the colonies to be represented in the English Parliament.¹ In

¹ Adam Smith argued that the colonies might justly be called upon to contribute to the defence of the empire, and suggested that they might very properly be admitted to representation in the Imperial Parliament. A writer who views this question from a colonial point of view (Jehu Matthews of Toronto, in his "A Colonist on the Colonial Question," London, 1872), still argues that the present relationship of fatherland and colonies cannot form the basis of a permanent connection, and that, in the absence of modification of the terms of union, a disruption of the empire is not likely to be long delayed. He proposes that the English Parliament, as at present constituted, should deal with all matters which have to do exclusively with the British Islands, and that an Imperial Parliament, dealing with the interests of the whole of the Queen's dominions, should be constituted by

theory such representation is well enough ; in practice, the expedient would be of little service to the colonies, might interfere somewhat with home concerns, and would not bring about the end in view. At the present time the British Parliament is peculiarly unwieldy. Much of the time of the House of Commons is wasted in trifling debate ; and as the writer of the article which appeared in the *Westminster Review* in 1852 points out, at the present time much of the neglect of colonial affairs is due, not to a want of proper feeling upon the part of England, not to any malice upon the part of the Colonial Office, but to the fact that the time of Parliament is overtaxed, the attention of Parliament overstrained, and the sentiments of Parliament already occupied by the pressing matters which are forced upon its consideration. He points out that one of the evils of our present colonial system of administration is the absence of any means by which colonial affairs can be discussed publicly in England ; and he proposes as a cure for the evils complained of, as a means of bringing about that unity of action, that community of thought and sentiment as to all inter-colonial questions such as those to which we have referred above, the institution of an advisory assembly or council, consisting of representatives from all the colonies. In that council all matters not purely local to the individual colonies, but matters external to individual dependencies, and connected with the inter-relations of these, with their relations to England, or with regard to the whole colonial empire, would be openly discussed and debated. He sees clearly the

the admission of a proper proportion of colonial representatives into the Parliament. He would also have two Governments—a Federal and a Local Executive Government. He tries to meet the objections to his suggestions with ingenuity, but he is more successful in his analysis of Mr. Goldwin Smith's argument for separation than in the synthesis of his own scheme of federation.

objections to representing the colonies in the House of Commons. We at the present time, even in our little country, and with our comparatively compact interests, have experienced the anomalies of having a question relating to English counties decided by a vote of Scotch and Irish members, or a Bill which relates to Scotland thrown out by Englishmen. This anomaly, and the evils which are incident to it, would be very materially increased if a British Parliament, with colonial representatives, had to decide upon all the questions of State both for Britain and her dependencies. The leisure, too, of the British Parliament is, as we have seen, not so spacious as to admit of its performing these important functions in relation to the colonies. The same writer advocates, then, with force and forethought, the institution of an advisory assembly, which should discuss all the questions of colonial significance much as our newspapers at the present time discuss all home and foreign questions, and which would still have to look to the British Parliament for the regulation of those inter- and extra-colonial relations which are so important to the well-being of the commonwealths. But under such circumstances it would be an informed British Parliament which would have to determine these intricate questions. It would be a Parliament, as it were, deciding upon a report of a permanent and skilled committee upon colonial affairs. We cannot but regard this suggestion as shrewd and sound. All that he says with regard to the weight of the counsels of such an assembly we are prepared to admit. That the wisdom which was in this body, although it was only an advising, and not an executing assembly, would make itself law in time, we believe. We cannot but believe that Parliament would be largely and ably guided by such an assembly. We cannot see that any more excellent suggestion in relation to this matter has been made.

Were such an assembly convened, we might soon hope for the adoption of an imperial tariff, of a law of copyright for the whole empire, and we should have a means of preventing any violation upon the part of any member of the confederation of the principles of their union by the strong but peaceful power of the public opinion of the whole. This is the growing power of the world, for it gives truth fairplay. A man's words, if they are true, are supported by greater force than that of legions, for verily the centuries will not gainsay them.

Mr. Forster's own suggestion points in the same direction. He argues that children should be taught to know something of the geography of our colonial empire. The object of such instruction would be to bring about an interest in the colonies, and a sympathy with the colonies, which is not felt at the present time—an interest and sympathy which are absolutely necessary to the continuance of those relations which exist between this country and those others which are like unto it, and also to the more thorough confederation which has been shadowed forth, and of which we do not despair. Without doubt such a branch of education would be valuable, and the suggestion comes appropriately from Mr. Forster; but the question whether such a culture can be more efficiently undertaken by the schools, or by such an advisory assembly as that we have alluded to, might well claim some discussion. Politics are not at the present time directly taught in this country in the schools, but are more efficiently, although indirectly, inculcated by the debates in Parliament. Indeed, the real importance of free and reported discussion is to be found in its educational effects. The discussions in the House do not convince the members, but they inform and instruct; so that we might say the debate is always some years before the actual division. If it is nothing else, St. Stephen's

is an admirable school of politics. The existence of such an advisory assembly would be a guarantee of a similar education, and the creation of a similar interest, in colonial questions, which at present exist in relation to home affairs. This indirect instruction would, it seems to us, more effectually secure the sympathy and interest which is desiderated than the direct instruction which Mr. Forster suggests. At the same time, we cannot but think that a real and accurate knowledge of the political geography of Britain and her colonies is an indispensable part of the proper education of a child who is to become an active and useful citizen of this great state.

The want of information as to, and the want of interest in, all colonial questions has been an admitted evil; but some endeavour has undoubtedly been made to remedy the evil. The Press does not at the present time so utterly disregard all colonial questions as formerly; but just as the time of Parliament is over-occupied, the space of the Press—that Lower House—is too limited to admit of a thorough treatment of the many important matters which demand publicity. The deputations which wait upon the Secretary for the Colonies are also calculated to disseminate general information on the subject, and to place at the disposal of the British Parliament information which may be of great importance. But we cannot, we confess, regard any of these means as likely to make up for the want of a Colonial Council composed of representatives from the colonies, the discussions in which would not only be the means of interesting the people of Britain in her dependencies, but would keep up an active interest in the colonies in relation to England. The conditions of federation are not difficult to determine. The principles of government which must be accepted by all the parties to the bargain are those which England has slowly worked

out, and which are aptly summarised in the article already referred to.¹

Each country which entered into the union must accept these principles and subscribe to these political tenets. Subject to these it would be the policy of the confederation to recognise the present position of each colony in relation to the Imperial Government; but that position would be open to modification and improvement by the ordinary course of legislation after full discussion in the Colonial House of Assembly in London.² Supreme power would, notwithstanding the existence of the Assembly, remain with Great Britain to maintain in their integrity the principles alluded to. In all cases intercolonial differences might be discussed in the Assembly, and adjudicated upon at the discretion of Parliament, either in the Courts of Law or in a Committee of the Colonial Council. In cases where the

¹ They are these:—

1. Fixity of law, and uniformity of its application to all British subjects alike, of whatever colour, race, or religion, and to all foreigners, as to all British subjects, with only the differences required by their different allegiance.

2. Separation of the judicial from other functions, trial by jury, and the independence and inviolability of judges and jurors.

3. The right of personal liberty equally secured to all by *Habeas Corpus*, without distinction of religion, race, or colour.

4. Subordination of the military to the civil power.

5. Freedom of discussion, by printing, writing, and spoken words.

6. Publicity of legislation, justice, taxation, and government accounts, under whatever forms these may be locally effected or administered.

7. Freedom of enterprise, commerce, and locomotion, exempt from protective or discriminative duties.

8. Religious equality as to civil rights, eligibilities, privileges, and liabilities of law, together with exemption in all colonies from compulsory payments for religious purposes.

9. Permanence and equality of the rights of all British subjects in every part of the empire alike, subject to the local laws.

² "The question between England and her colonies," says Mr. Hurlburt in his interesting work on "Britain and her Colonies," London, 1865, "ought not to be one of separation but of sounder relations, as alike the interest of both, and the interest of good government throughout the world."

differences referred to matters of policy in any way affecting the empire, they would, in the first instance, be submitted to Council, and subsequently to Parliament. The whole of the confederation would offer equal rights and privileges to all subjects of the British Crown. The judges would throughout be appointed by the Crown. The laws, as far as possible, ought to be assimilated through the whole empire.¹ The legal processes should be identified and recognised in every state of the union, and legal practitioners eligible to practise in one should have the same right in all the others. Each colony should maintain troops for the benefit of the empire in proportion to its ability, and that ability would be assessed by Parliament after full discussion in the Assembly. Attacks upon any part of the empire would be resented and resisted by the whole force of the confederation, and a wrong done to any of the colonial subjects would be dealt with as a wrong done to a British subject is at present. If a national member of the confederation should injure or offend a foreign power, and after due inquiry by the Council and vote of Parliament be adjudged in the wrong, such individual state—if the act complained of was the spontaneous action of the colony, and was unauthorised by the Council and Parliament—would be required to bear the whole of the costs of reparation out of its own resources, without contribution from any other state in the confederation. A contumacious colony would be liable either to coercion, or, in the discretion of the other members of the confederation, to expulsion. Any colony would be at liberty to withdraw from the union, unless it was in default in relation to some of its obligations, or disobedient to some order

¹ The continuance of the supreme appellate jurisdiction for all colonial cases, at present in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and ultimately, under the Act of this session, in the House of Lords, will have this effect to some extent.

which had been made in reference to it as a member of the confederation.

These rules, then, which are, for the most part, suggested in the article to which we have already so often referred, seem to us to answer the question which Mr. Forster professed himself incapable of dealing with. Upon these terms of mutual rights and common benefits the confederation of English nations might be more permanent than any national institution which the world has seen. Indeed, it would have within it possibilities such as few states have ever enjoyed. It would be capable of ruling the world in peace; it would be capable of indefinite extension, and would to some extent realise the prophecy of the angels, "Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." We are glad to see that Mr. Forster speaks some brave words as to his hope that some day the United States of America may become a part of the great confederation of English peoples. We look back with regret to the past which separated America from Britain, but we look forward to the future with hope that it will make the two halves of the nation one again; and we cannot but feel with Mr. Forster that this hope—the hope of such an alliance between the Americans and the English—"is not the least powerful of those beliefs which make one think politics worth pursuing." But the way to bring about that alliance is not, we are certain, by throwing off the colonies we have, not by a cowardly and selfish isolation of Britain, but by a continuance in that course of conciliation which we have hitherto pursued, and an improvement of our relations with the colonies in the way which has been pointed out. We are a nation of merchants, and have, therefore, been the propagandists of men. No creed has sent out so many missionaries as that of liberty. But we must not be content with sending out these missionaries; we have other duties to perform. Liberty will not prosper if we turn our back on these colonies.

Peace will not abide with us or them if Britain passes piecemeal into the coming time. We must strengthen, encourage, and help these our neighbours, who are bone of our bone. We have many lessons to teach which they have to learn, we are the recipients of many truths which they must receive. We must carry these to the colonies, and make them more one with us in a high intellectual and moral unity, to which this community of laws, of nationality, of allegiance, and rights would be a fitting basis. It is not by separating from Australia that we can become one with America. It is rather by setting an example of unity in spite of distance and dividing seas, of community in spite of differences, and of brotherly love in spite of world-wide separations. Our confederation would be an example of the goodly effects of freedom to the world, and the association might well become attractive to that other great colony which has been the pride of Englishmen when they have thought of our energy, our zeal, our rise, our growth, our progress; and the disgrace of Englishmen when they have thought on the unity which should be and was not. All this we hope for, all this we may attain, if we follow Mr. Forster's statesman-like advice, instead of the rash utterances of those who would have us separate from our colonies. We may yet throughout the whole world "dwell together in unity."

II

AFGHANISTAN¹

PASSION is a poor ally in affairs of the reason, and questions of Imperial policy can be better discussed in the quiet of the study than in the uproar of the platform. To a very great extent our recent policy in the East—for the Eastern question spreads from the Danube to the Indus, from Constantinople to Peshawur—has suffered by reason of its being made the subject of party discussion. These subjects are hacks upon which men ride to power, and it is unfortunate that many questions which were formerly regarded as outside the domain of party politics, have recently been brought within the long and unsteady reach of public discussion and polemical argument. No subject has been more before the public than what has been spoken of as the Afghan question. The pens of illustrious statesmen and lawyers were enlisted on both sides, the platform resounded with party cries, and even the pulpit was made the vehicle for the conveyance of

¹ 1. "History of Afghanistan from the Earliest Period to the Outbreak of the War of 1878." By Colonel G. B. Malleson, C.S.I. Second Edition. London, 1879. 2. "The Races of Afghanistan: being a Brief Account of the Principal Nations inhabiting that Country." By Surgeon-Major H. W. Bellew, C.S.I. Calcutta and London, 1880. 3. "Kandahar in 1879: being the Diary of Major Le Messurier, R.E." London, 1880. 4. "Causes of the Afghan War." London, 1879. 5. "Baunú; or our Afghan Frontier." By S. S. Thorburn. London, 1876. 6. "The Afghan Frontier." By Sir George Campbell, M.P. London, 1879. 7. "Lord Lytton and the Afghan War." By Captain W. J. Eastwick. Fifth Edition. London, 1879. 8. "Memorial of the Patriotic Association to Her Majesty's Government." Printed in the *Times*, September 4, 1880. 9. "Letters on Afghan Affairs in 1880." Bombay, 1880.

sound views upon the question of the right and justice of the war in Afghanistan. Now, we should be very unwilling to say that the fullest discussion of any question was not fraught with benefit. There is no subject too sacred to be touched by reason. The more that the free minds of free men and the free tongues and free pens of men free from all restraints but those of due responsibility and conscience, are brought to bear upon a subject, the better for truth. But free discussion is a very different thing from discussion for party purposes. Many questions of domestic policy can no doubt be more satisfactorily settled after a full party debate. The nation can hold the balance true between the garbling of either side. In such a case the interested motives of the disputants can do little harm. Such questions are a fair field upon which men may fight for place and power. The interests involved are between class and class of the same community; and are in their nature like large parochial questions. But when the question is one of Imperial policy, when it is one by which our national neighbours may be affected, and in which, consequently, other countries are interested, and may profit by our errors, or by our contentions, then it seems that the question ought to be removed out of the purview of party politics, no longer ought to be treated as a legitimate question upon which to fight small party battles for the sake of portfolios, but that the question should be looked at in a broader, calmer, and clearer light than that of the jaundiced light of jealousy or of the flare of passion, and that every citizen should endeavour to think what would be best, not for himself, but for the nation as a whole.

Now we say, with confidence, that many questions which would formerly have been treated as national questions have in recent times been dealt with as simply party politics, and we regard this change as one which

is to be deprecated. We think that to this deplorable fact many of the errors which have been committed in relation to Afghanistan are due. There has been too much heat and too little light in this discussion. We do not say that the present Government are alone to blame. Politicians on both sides seem willing to fall into this error. But we believe that many of the weak measures—and weakness in politics is almost as bad as wickedness—which have disfigured the administration both of Mr. Gladstone's and Lord Beaconsfield's Governments, are ultimately due to this unseemly fact. We shall endeavour here to raise the question out of the trampled mud of politics, and to find a solution for the Afghan difficulty, irrespective of all considerations of Whig or Tory, of office or opposition. The recent history of Afghanistan is in everybody's mind. Errors have no doubt been committed in the past, and while it may be of importance to some to weigh these in hair balances, and apportion the blame to those to whom it is due, to us it seems that the main question is rather as to the future than as to the past. Those who have been in power may have made grave mistakes. We are not concerned to defend all the utterances of Lord Lytton, or all the acts of Lord Beaconsfield's administration. But we are seriously concerned that no further mistakes be made, that the errors of the past be as far as possible retrieved, and that those who have the power now, should use it to the advantage, and not to the detriment of the Empire. At no time has the importance of the Afghan question been so paramount. A wrong turn in the road of policy now will mean an immense distance from the path of rectitude as time carries us farther and farther. We have, before long, to come to a decision which will colour our policy for a quarter of a century, which may result in excellent or terrible results, as we choose well or ill, which may hand down our names with honour or infamy to many

generations who may have to reap the dire or happy harvests which we are about to sow. It behoves us to be very careful. No rash desire on the part of the present Government to do something which the late Government would not have done, will excuse it in the eyes of the people for an error. No attempt to follow in the policy Lord Beaconsfield is said to have inaugurated will be acceptable if it leads us wrong. The Government have a great opportunity. But great opportunity means great success or great failure. What are they to do with Afghanistan? Is what they have already done wise or prudent? These are grave questions, and if we cannot answer them we can present some considerations which may at least tend towards an answer. But the question, What are we to do in relation to Afghanistan? receives much light from a contemplation of what our policy has always been in relation to that country. That we could not be indifferent to the condition of Afghanistan long ago forced itself as a fact upon the obtusest of statesmen. Every one has been impressed for the last forty years with the belief that we had substantial interests in India, which might be jeopardised by the attitude of Afghanistan, or by the presence in Afghanistan of a powerful foe. It was evidently necessary to do something to secure a friendly attitude upon the part of Afghanistan. That has been our policy. There was a considerable difficulty in securing an attitude in the Afghans at all. It is very difficult to get an attitude in a jelly-fish, and the constitution of the Afghans was scarcely higher in the scale of national development than that of the jelly-fish is in natural evolution. That, then, has been the main difficulty. A strong nation amongst the mountains of Afghanistan would, no doubt, have been a valuable ally. Such a nation would, if friendly, have been the means of putting a limit to the land aggrandisement of Russia, and of turning the tide of aggression which has flowed

and is flowing over Central Asia. But a nation which was not a nation at all, a nation which was so fiercely independent that it wished to be independent of all rule, a people to whom lawlessness was a law, was worse than useless as an ally. An open enemy in such a position would be better than a weak friend. So it is that we have been led to attempt to give stability to certain Governments of Afghanistan without unduly interfering with the internal affairs of an independent State. We have set the ricketty child in splints, and sought to get a "friendly attitude" by means of many arts. We once made the mistake of attempting to set up a Government under our influence and of maintaining it by means of our support. That that was a fatal error the history of the Government of Shah Soojah sufficiently shows, and wisdom would dissuade from a repetition of a similar blunder. But it might almost be said that there is one thing man does not learn from, and that is experience. Notwithstanding our then mistake¹—a mistake so fatal that in thinking of it Sir George Campbell is betrayed into the strong language of conjuring the Government "for God's sake" not to attempt to establish a Government which does not succeed in maintaining itself without our aid (p. 66)—we are, it would seem, repeating history in our recognition of Abdurrahman, for it seems almost certain that he will be unable to hold his own against the terrible irruptive forces within the country, and the insidious influence of cunning Courts outside, without British money and British aid. This is the view taken by a writer of some sensible letters upon Afghan affairs, and

¹ That it was a mistake most people are agreed. The author of "Kandahar in 1879" thinks that the Ghilzais might have been used to oust Sheer Ali and that a Ghilzais chief might thus have been made the Amir; but he admits that it would have been a mistake, and goes no farther into prophecy than to say that such a chief "might have been able to hold his own and rule the country" (pp. 100-101), and he might not.

Sir George Campbell has himself expressed a strong opinion that, "without the command of money and large foreign territory, no permanent government of Afghanistan as a whole is possible" (p. 65). For many years, as we have said, we have been trying to secure a friendly hold upon Afghanistan, and that policy has had two objects in view: the first and most important was the frustration of the designs of Russia; and the second, to secure peace upon our borders, and turn the races upon our frontier from marauders and thieves into harmless and inoffensive neighbours. The policy of the past, looked at as if one of these objects, instead of both, had been the motive of it, would be ridiculous. The constant aggression of the Afghan tribes upon our borders is a notorious fact. Any one who will look at the history of our relations with Afghanistan will see how much trouble these neighbours have given us. Even our recent experience might induce us to take some speedy and effectual way of getting rid once and for ever of all the annoyance and trouble which has come to us from our policy in that quarter. It is a curious fact, and one well known to the people of India, that every conqueror of Hindostan has come thither by way of Afghanistan; but when each of them had once reached the plains of India, his expulsion seemed impossible. And if that is true of the conquerors of India, it seems likely to be true too that trouble to us will come—if it come at all—along the same path. We have always since we became a neighbour of Afghanistan been kept anxious by the turmoil and anarchy which has existed almost continually in that hotbed of disorder. We have endeavoured to secure peace and friendship on our borders. The treaty with Dost Mahomed Khan marks one of our efforts (1855). The difficulties of the course we steered between Sheer Ali and Afzul Khan were innumerable, and their history is one of embroiled diplomacy. We had interests which it was necessary

to protect, and we have sought to secure them as if the ruler of Afghanistan was an European monarch, instead of an Eastern potentate, upon a throne which rested upon treachery. But let us get back to facts. The criminal returns show that murder is infinitely more frequent in the Punjaub than in the other parts of India ; but in the Punjaub the Peshawar district is most famous for its fatal crimes. Neighbours who carry death into one's borders require some recognition, and mere passive neutrality in relation to such firebrands is more than the law of nations or morality demands of us. We have attempted again and again to punish the tribes who thus wrought mischief within our empire. It is doubtless, as we heard at the Mansion House the other day, the duty of a Government to secure life and property within its jurisdiction, but that duty is no less imperative when life and property are threatened from without, as in the case of the Punjaub, than when threatened from within, as in the case of Ireland. But all our efforts have not put an end to the raids of the wild tribes. We have sent them to a commercial Coventry, in punishment of their crimes, and denied them the benefits of our trade, but that without subduing the "passionate independence" of the Afghans, which some writers so much admire. We have, too, made retaliatory invasions of their territories without much result. We have marched into the hills, we have seen the tribes scatter before our arms, we have burned a village which was almost too poor to make a good bonfire, and have returned again with a tormenting fringe of natives on our rear. Even up to the most recent times we have not secured peace on our borders. Now this of itself is far from satisfactory. We ought to be able to keep these tribes in check and we have failed. It is true, that up to the present time the cohesion of the Afghan tribes has been so slight that union amongst them has been impossible, and serious self-originated

combination against our arms has been impossible. Still the number of murders in the Peshawar district remains to attest the feebleness of our repulsion of these unneighbourly neighbours, and calls for some measure, such, for instance, as that which was advocated by Dr. Bellew, which will terminate the restless and dangerous hostility of these aggressive mountain tribes. But it would be altogether erroneous to look at this question of our troublesome neighbours apart from the larger question of our relations to Russia. That country has been stalking over the world in seven-league boots. Since 1862 she has travelled on the road of conquest some 1500 miles towards India. Lord Salisbury once told some Russophobists, who feared Russia, and who looked for confirmation of their fears to the enormous progress of that country, to study "large maps"—but, in answer to his superior sneer, we may say that it requires large maps to follow the Russian progress: Russian garrisons are now at Samarkand, Tashkend, Bokhara, and Khokan. They can mass armies within striking distance of our north-west frontier of India. Is not that a matter for serious consideration? Did Russia come in this force to acquire the desert? or is the desert the road to India? One will go a weary journey to Paradise; but Central Asia—it is not worth the annexation. Russian ambition will not stop in the sand. We do not say, as many have said, as the Patriotic Association in their Memorial to the Government do say, that the one object of Russia from the first has been India. We are content to believe that Russian progress is like skating, when every step requires a further one in order to maintain equilibrium. We are content to believe that, as apologists say, "tendencies have been stronger than promises," and that Russia has been forced on against her honest will until she is no further from our borders than Aberdeen is from London. We know that she is again on the war-path, and that

every fresh advance is an excuse for further advances. All these facts complicate the question of—What is to be done with our troublesome neighbours the Afghans? The mere question of “policing” the frontier would be a very different one if Russia were still at the Caspian. What has always drawn Russia on has been the turbulence of the tribes beyond her borders. We do not say that that is not a sufficient reason for conquest. A civilised power is bound to secure her borders from lawless aggression, and Russia has in some instances been drawn on to the East by the crimes of her neighbours. Such barbarous nations as she was brought into contact with were not to be policed by means of occasional invasions, but by the strong, firm hand of conquest. But where is this march of Russia to stop? Neutral zones, when the neutrality is combined with savagery, are impossible, and it seems to be certain to all wise foreseeing persons that England and Russia must meet in Asia.

In view of this conclusion, the Afghan Question assumes quite other proportions. It is no longer a question of securing the inoffence of these rabble tribes, but securing India against a foe who may step upon Afghan necks towards our frontier. If turbulence is the excuse of Russian advance, it will, when it is at Merv, find enough of that excuse in Afghanistan. If lawlessness invites the presence of the missionaries of law, Afghanistan is urging one of her great neighbours to come and rule her. The question to be solved at present is which of these great neighbours it is to be. If we retain what we have got, it will be England; if we retire now, after our loss of blood and money, if we go back again like a snail into our thin shell of frontier on the Indus, it will be Russia. Now the presence of Russia in Afghanistan would be fraught with terrible danger to us. Our whole policy has been to estrange Afghanistan from Russia, and to secure

her friendship for ourselves; if we retire now, we cannot but think that our policy will result in what we have been seeking to avoid. For these reasons, and for others which we shall urge, we believe that the safety of our Indian Empire depends upon our continuing to hold Afghanistan. True, some scrupulous consciences would have us only take a little bit, apparently holding, like the woman who had the child out of wedlock, that the smallness of the size mitigated the criminality. But if these views are thoroughly considered, their seeming scrupulosity will be found to be nothing but cowardly shrinking from responsibility.

To those who deny the imminence of a Russian question in Afghanistan, history must be a sealed book. We know too much of the recent past to be able to shut our eyes to the immediate future. History tells us that while many of our statesmen continued to credit Russia with sincerity, her bills upon belief had already been dishonoured at other Courts. Her designs were not disguised by the flimsy falsehoods in which she thought fit to wrap them. A lie in the mouth of a habitually truthful person may deceive, but the continuity of deception in those who have already been convicted of falsehood can blind only the foolish to the truth. Russian policy has been better understood in Afghanistan than at the India Office. The Amir Sheer Ali knew the worth of Russian assurances, for he had seen what they had said and what they had done about Khiva. It is easy to promise when you have no intention to perform, and the diplomacy of Russia in relation to the Eastern Question seems to have consisted largely of unvarnished statements. She has by her practice tended to justify an unseemly emphasis on the latter part of the term, statecraft. But why these assurances should have deceived English ministers, Indian viceroys, and large numbers of the

English people, it is difficult to say. That they did deceive seems certain.¹ High officials clung to the last to Prince Gortchakow's promise not to send his agents to Afghanistan. We know how truly that was kept. When the Amir complained to England of the advance of Russia, and expressed his fears of that advance ; when he went so far as to suggest the very method of Russian approach in prophetic history, and hinted that they would occupy Merv, that the Turkomans would then seek refuge in Afghanistan, and be a thorn in the side of the Russians, who would hold Afghanistan responsible, or would invade Afghan territory with a view to the punishment of the Turkomans—all this was pointed out to us ; but we assured the Amir that his fears were unfounded. We had the Russian assurance that Afghanistan was outside the sphere in which Russia might be called to exercise her influence. True, she had made similar assurances before, and her progress had gone on unlimited by promises. True, the sphere in which she exercised what she called her "influence" had expanded and expanded. She had been drawn on from Orenburgh to Tashkend, from Tashkend to Khiva, and Central Asia was a Russian province. But still our Ministers credited Russia with honourable designs. We had doubts of her policy, but we dissembled these and played "a waiting game." We countenanced the Amir. We were convinced of the necessity of friendly relations with our neighbour. We must have intimate

¹ Are they not again deceiving our Government? If not, what is the meaning of Lord Ripon's statement at the Durbar held at Lahore on the 15th November, that his intention was to resume the policy of Lord Lawrence and follow in his footsteps ; and that the chiefs, like the Government, must turn their attention to internal progress? There was really and substantially no distinction between the policy of Lord Lawrence and Lord Lytton ; but it suits party purposes to make it seem that Lord Lytton's policy was a new departure, and the Viceroy is, we are sorry to see, a party politician.

treaty relations. Even one of the most tardy of viceroy acknowledged that "our relations with Afghanistan are of a kind quite inconsistent with neutrality in its strict sense." We were most anxious to secure peace on its borders, and any embroilment of Afghanistan in an external war would, we knew, be a serious peril to India. We must, therefore, have a say in its external policy. We would, in case it was threatened, supply it with money, with arms and men, but we must be a judge of the necessity. The urgency of the case in the present instance was, we were certain, exaggerated. It might be well to have officers resident in Afghanistan. It would be well if an English officer of skill and ability surveyed the frontier of Afghanistan which we might be called upon to defend. All these negotiations took place. At one time, at least, the Amir was ready to throw himself into our arms, but it was more consistent with Western custom to shake hands. We would have friendly relations, but we would make friends our way, not his. We knew that it was a fallacy to suppose that India could be defended upon the Indus, we knew that our battle must be fought in or beyond Afghanistan if it was to be fought successfully; and we were willing to enter into treaties by which the Amir was bound to be friend of our friends, and enemy of our enemies; we were willing to support and encourage him as *de facto* ruler, but not to meddle in the internal affairs of the country, not to recognise his dynasty. We were willing to subsidise if necessary; we did send arms, but at the same time we continued to place reliance upon the word of a perjured diplomacy, as if it had been as immaculate as a divine revelation. Credulity is a crime in politics! We have no right to give criminals the credit for the best of motives, and our mistake in that regard is an open door to outrage.

We have sketched thus rapidly, but we believe

correctly, the policy of this country in relation to Afghanistan. Any more detailed reference to it would in these pages be superfluous. The Blue Books which were ably analysed and commented upon in a recent number,¹ contain a full and authentic history of all these negotiations to which we have alluded. Our object here is to understand the motives which in the past have dictated our political conduct in relation to Afghanistan. To some it might seem that there has been no principle of continuity in that policy, and that it has been changed in the hands of each successive viceroy. But such an opinion is consistent only with considerable ignorance. It is true that sometimes a Governor-General took a more apprehensive view of the situation than another. It is true that sometimes a Governor-General was inclined to go a little further to secure the friendliness of the Amir than a predecessor. But throughout the principle of the policy has been the same.² Every viceroy has looked upon

¹ *Westminster Review*, January 1879.

² Hence the evil of Lord Ripon's statement (made on the 15th November at Lahore) that he meant to resume the policy of Lord Lawrence, and hinting that the last viceroy had turned his attention more to external affairs than to internal progress. The press in this country believes that this statement will be received with satisfaction, and one party organ says: "It was an announcement of the final close of that unfortunate period in the history of our Indian Empire which was marked by the administration of Lord Lytton in Calcutta and of Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook at home. The departure from this wise policy of former Indian statesmen which has brought about all the troubles of the Afghan war will be but a temporary aberration." This is of course erroneous and misleading, and shows the evil we commented on of making such matters party cries. Mr. Gladstone at the Mansion House said that the policy of the Government was to restore the independence of the people of Afghanistan, and to secure their friendly relations with the Indian Empire. Lord Lawrence said long ago that the policy towards Afghanistan was to "bear with the Afghans as far as we could reasonably do so, and to endeavour by kindness and conciliation to bring about friendly relations, gradually leading them to see that their interests and ours do not conflict." Now that has been the policy throughout, but the "bearing so long as we reasonably could" came to an end when there was a Russian mission at Cabul, and the time has gone by for restoring Afghan independence.

Afghanistan as a neighbour with whom we must have friendly or intimate relations. Every viceroy would have looked upon friendliness between Afghanistan and Russia as a source of imminent peril. No one said that England must treat Afghanistan as she would any other independent neutral State. The money we have paid to it, our negotiations from the beginning to the end, negative any such belief. Even the war which we have recently waged was a part of the same policy. We were determined that Afghanistan must have friendly relations with us, and not with Russia; that she should see that our interests did not conflict; and we undertook the war because the ruler of the Afghans refused to give us those securities for his friendliness which we deemed necessary to our own safety. But we confess that we think there has not only been a continuity of principle in our policy, but a continuity of weakness. Waiting games are seldom winning games, and our half-measures, our half-policies have, it seems to us, led to many of our recent difficulties. It is with regard to the future that we have to do; but we would protest most strongly against any reversion to that policy of doing as little as we can, that policy of purchasing friendship with money, and allies by promises, which has exposed us to continual danger in the past, and dragged us into an expensive and troublesome war in the present. Every one admits that there is danger from Russia in an unfriendly Afghanistan: are we to enter again upon the old policy of first creating an Afghanistan out of the wreck of disintegrated races which war within its borders, and then to secure the friendliness of the State which is propped by our bayonets? We hope not. Our fear—let us look it in the face—is not Afghanistan, but Russian aggression; the way to meet it is to be aggressive too, and not by a shrinking policy of monetary conciliation. Russia cannot complain if England meets

her upon her war-path ready for battle, instead of waiting until that war-path has brought its bloody track into our own peaceful fields. To meet Russia where she ought to be met, to be in a position to expel Russia—not necessarily by war, but by the strength which is a guarantee of peace—England must be in possession of Afghanistan. Now, as formerly, we have two matters to consider in making up our minds as to our policy. We must remember that Afghanistan is a most troublesome neighbour to India—that that very troublousness would be the excuse for Russian aggression, and that if Russia was in possession of Afghanistan there would be nothing to prevent her becoming the mistress of India too. We suppose we may assume that few readers of this *Review* would hold that a Russian conquest of India was a matter for congratulation to Englishmen.

We believe that it would be a matter for centuries of condolence with the inhabitants of Hindostan. We shall, therefore, not in this place argue that we should do what we can to prevent such a consummation. That, to prevent it, we should, if necessary, undertake the control of Afghanistan, is what we believe many will be prepared to admit, and the issue will be joined on the question whether it is necessary or not. We are prepared to argue that it is necessary and justified. But we think that the future of Afghanistan ought to have some of our care, irrespective of the question of the safety of India. We believe most firmly that Afghanistan must ere long be annexed either by India or Russia. The belief that two great and civilised nations might keep a neutral zone of uncivilisation between them has long ago been abandoned. No student of history, of policy, believes that such a neutral zone is possible between Russia and England in the East. Afghanistan must be ruled by the Emperor of Russia or the Empress of India. Now we ought, we think,

to consider which alternative will be the best for the people of Afghanistan. We may be accused of partiality by those who are unscrupulous as to the weapons they use in the warfare of words, but we cannot believe that any candid mind will deny that while the influence of Russian conquest is baneful, the influence of British conquest is on the whole beneficent. The one is a great school of freedom, the other is a seminary where every green shoot of personal autonomy is crushed beneath the weight of mountainous authority. In the one the public service is pure, in the other it is corrupt. In the one the Government acts as a trustee for the people, in the other the Government acts as if it had a fee simple of the bodies and souls of its subjects. Mr. Cowen, in one of his eloquent speeches, if we remember aright, compared the power of Russia to a great iceberg floating from the north into southern seas, and chilling with its great cold presence the heart of summer in the very eye of the sun. But might it not, even more aptly, in comparison with England, be likened to that child of Alpine winter, a glacier, while English influence is like that child of spring, a river? Does it not sweep down from its cold fastnesses, in slow lumbering progress, but with a weight which crushes the rocks, and hollows the mountains? Does it not score the valley, uproot the tree and herb, and accumulate along its sides, and at its limit, huge cairns of stones, or moraines, as monuments to its destructiveness? Nothing flourishes near it! It is like the march of winter! A river, on the other hand, flows along, and its sound is laughter. It sometimes does harm in its intemperate floods, but for the most part it fertilises all it touches. It makes all the valleys green; trees grow upon its margin; the meadows beside it are full of flowers; cities rear themselves upon its banks, and argosies float upon its bosom. But leaving similes and looking at facts, we ask any one to compare the

provinces which Russia has conquered with our own India, and say in which the inhabitants have the greatest amount of happiness. Can it be said that we have been unjust in India, and that our conquests there have resulted in the misery of the races over which we rule? There are some, we believe, who would even go this length in reckless assertion. But their irresponsible venom has been triumphantly answered by the Director-General of Statistics to the Indian Government. Mr. W. W. Hunter, in his recent lecture in Edinburgh (Nov. 12), has shown that the English rule in India has been an immense blessing to the people. It has diffused peace and comfort amongst the inhabitants, it is promoting the spread of intelligence, it insures justice to millions who formerly had reason to identify law with caprice, and government with anarchy. There are now roads where there were none, the country is, as the Americans say, "gridironed" with railways, there are schools everywhere, and the laws are as excellent as those of the mother country. But the Government has not only done these things: it provides against famines by its stores, plants cinchona in order that the people may suffer less from ague, tries to discover a cure for snake-bite, and withal taxes the people much more lightly than the old rulers used to do. The revenue, too, which is raised, is no longer spent, as it used to be, in the pomp of courts, but in those things which conduce to the peace, the happiness, the comfort and convenience of the people. But if we look on this picture, and on that which is held up to us in any reliable work on Russia, we see what a haggard contrast the provinces of all the Russias make to a smiling India, and we are forced to the conclusion that, if these results have followed our conquest of India, we might look for as favourable results from our continued occupation of Afghanistan. When we propose this annexation in the interests of the Empire, we are not

unmindful of the interests of the inhabitants of the country. The first conditions of the happiness of a country are a settled Government and the peace which such a Government alone can give. Now, it is certain that these boons can only be given to Afghanistan by a strong Government of conquest. The withdrawal of our arms from Afghanistan would leave the people worse off than they have ever been before. We have no right to vacate a seat of government which will be occupied by anarchy when we are gone. Our invasion will have been a positive evil to the great mass of the people unless we are prepared to confirm our victory of war with our victories of peace. We want to make friends, and if we turn our backs now we leave enemies. We made war on the Amir, and the people have suffered. The memory of our invasion will make gunpowder which enemies will not hesitate to use. But apart from these political considerations, which we shall have to consider hereafter, are there not some philanthropic reasons to be urged for our continued occupation? Remember, we only displace conquerors by conquerors. We displace oppressors by a law-abiding Government. The Afghans, the dominant race in Afghanistan, rule over an inferior race of Indian blood, who till the land, who are in the position of serfs, but who are the aboriginal inhabitants of the country. The masses of the inhabitants require government and law, and shall we withhold these blessings from them when we have been the means of depriving them of a ruler who insured them some amount of order? We think that merely for the sake of the inhabitants, who without our rule will be left to the mercies of anarchy, and who under our sway may in time enjoy a community of blessings with the inhabitants of Hindostan, we ought to continue to hold and rule Afghanistan. The addition which would be made by such a Government to the great treasury of human happiness would be immense, and

it would justify the assumption of heavy responsibilities, of heavy burdens which might be lightly borne in so noble a cause.

But we confess, although the happiness of the inhabitants of the country weighs with us in advising the annexation, it is not the principal reason for the course which we think it would be well to adopt. It is, however, so intimately connected with these reasons, that our decision would be incomplete, as to grounds, unless that reason had also been referred to. The happiness of the people of Afghanistan is not only a question for the philanthropist, but for the statesman ; for the latter ought to be aware that it is only a peaceful, a happy, a strong Afghanistan which could be any protection of our Indian dominions against the large encroachments of Russia. Had there always been a strong and stable Government at Cabul, our policy of the past would have been less foolish ; and did such a Government now exist, our policy for the future might move in the same direction. But there never has been a real strong Government of Afghanistan as a whole, and the possibility of such a Government from a native source is denied by very competent authorities. Under these circumstances it behoves us to do something more than we have been endeavouring to do. We have seen that we have made efforts to establish a strong friendly Government upon our north-west frontier of India. We lent our countenance to *de facto* rulers, but we hesitated to promise to protect such rulers from their enemies. We withheld our money when we could, and sent as few arms as possible. We insisted upon the presence at Cabul of a Resident, that most irritating of ambassadors ; and, still with a view to the friendship which we courted, we had ultimately to go to war. But what do we propose to do now ? To found friendship upon enmity ? To have the enemies we have made by the

sword turned into friends by the magic of a treaty? Is a nation's memory so short that it can forget the blood we have spilt and tears that have fallen? It is true we said our war was with the Amir of Cabul and not with the people; but, as Mr. Burt remarked in the House of Commons, we really have expended our energies in fighting the people of Afghanistan. Will these people take our word for it that we were their friends, and that the deaths we caused were deaths by misadventure? Is it not the fact that if we retire from Afghanistan, and leave them to that "passionate independence" which has made unity impossible and rule impracticable, we shall leave behind us the bitterness and deep hatred, which is the stuff which foes, not friends, are made of?¹ Have we not gone much too far for that? Have we not made the impossibility of a strong friendly power greater than it was before? It is only by courtesy in the past that we could have spoken of the "Afghan nation." The rule of the Amir was scarcely efficient anywhere. There were some curious growths of free institutions in his borders which often degenerated into licence, and there were many tribes which were quite independent of the central Government. What will be the state of Afghanistan if we withdraw from that quarrelled land? Are we to allow any ruler, Abdurrahman or any one else, to attempt to bring the country under his sway? What hope is there of such a result? Neither Dost Mahomed, nor any other Amir, ever pretended to be the ruler of the great mass of tribes who hold the country adjoining India, from Surat in the north, to Quettah in the south. What hope is there now, after our invasion, that any ruler could subdue half of the rebellious elements within his country? Are we to assist any *de facto* ruler to obtain a rule over Wakham,

¹ This is the opinion of most authorities. See Sir George Campbell's "Afghan Frontier," pp. 47, 50; and "Letters on Afghan Affairs," p. xv.

where at the best of times the government of the Amirs was merely nominal? Are we to attempt to force the Badukshanees back into the suzerainty of the Afghans, whose yoke they have thrown off? Are we likely, if we undertake these duties, which would cost us as much as to subdue the country on our own account, to make these races more friendly to us? Is it the sword and the rifle that get allies? Are we not certain, if we undertake any such volunteer service, to drive those races into the arms of Russia, into that embrace which turns out to be the strangling hug of a bear? Would such a course be policy or play? The country will not, we are certain, sanction any such policy. Sir George Campbell warns us, we think rightly, that it is a fallacy "to suppose that we can find or establish a strong and friendly Government with whom we can make terms" (p. 7). But he seems, we think erroneously, to believe that we might make a number of little and friendly Governments out of the various tribes round a strong Government of our own at Guznee, with whom we might make terms. We confess we see little more reason for believing in one than in the other, and we think that each of these small independent States would remain an element of danger to our establishment at Guznee. To us it seems that there is only one way to make savages and children friends, and that is by the firm rule of equal law. If we are content to hold Afghanistan as a place of arms, if we are content to assume the grave responsibilities of this addition to our Empire, and the burdens of the cost which would necessarily be involved—for it would be many years, we believe, before the small revenue which we might derive from Afghanistan would be sufficient to meet the establishment charges—then in time, it may be a generation, but in time, we should find that we had added not only an impregnable country, with a most healthy climate, and roads and

products which would tempt our commerce, to our dominion; but had secured for fellow-subjects a quiet, peaceable, robust, and happy race of people. That these would be useful to the Empire we cannot doubt. We have recently seen Indian troops in Europe, and we cannot but think that in any future war in which England might be engaged, she would employ many Indian soldiers. Out of India, Indian soldiers would be more useful than at home, for ever since the Mutiny we have shrunk from placing too many arms in the hands of natives. But suppose the native troops of India withdrawn to Europe or Africa, they might be replaced by Afghans. We are not in such a millennium yet that we can dispense with a military establishment, and troops drawn from the many brave and robust races of Afghanistan would be of invaluable service in India. This idea is favoured by Sir George Campbell, who says, "We might hold India with the aid of Asiatic non-Indian soldiers" (p. 79). But although these are our views, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that quite other opinions are held in other quarters. Many persons, we believe, still cling to the belief that the Indus is a good enough frontier for our Indian possessions. Sir George Campbell, who has had much and valuable Indian experience, takes a somewhat curious view in his little work, "The Afghan Frontier." He remarks that he has "always thought and said that if the mountains of Afghanistan had been occupied by a people in any degree resembling those of the Himalayas, if the Afghans had in any degree resembled in character the people of Cashmere or of the hill country of the Kangra, Simla, or Kumaon districts, or even those of Nepaul"—he "should have thought it extremely desirable that we should, in some shape, occupy the country and so complete our defences; but we know by painful experience that the Afghans are a people of a totally different character—turbulent, bred

from infancy to the use of arms, and with a passion for independence in which they are exceeded by no people in the world" (pp. 2, 3). His argument would seem to be that docility should invite outrage. But one of the strongest reasons why we cannot complete our defences on the north-west of India without permanently occupying the country is that these people are turbulent, bred to arms, and intolerably independent. Centrifugal force is all very well, but when it breaks the wheel to pieces it goes too far. Independence is a stalwart virtue, but when it makes law and government impossible, its excellence is open to question. He goes on, however, to say that he has thought "that the passion for independence of a people occupying such a country is the best safeguard of our frontier." We, on the contrary, should have thought that that quickset-hedge of a nation, turbulent, bred to arms, and lawless, was the very worst protection which we could have found; indeed, Sir George Campbell himself ought to have thought so, for a few pages further on he remarks that the Amir's power—that power which was to protect us against the might of Russia—"fell to pieces" before our arms, "at the first touch" (p. 13). He also says at a later page that "no two tribes ever seem capable of uniting against us for offence, and if ever they did unite they would still be contemptible enemies down in the plains" (p. 44). And these are the people who are to stand between us and Russia! Indeed, it could not be otherwise. Turbulence on a border is the forerunner of annexation. When turbulence lies between two borders, one of the nations must police that turbulence into order, and in this case it is only a question whether that is to be accomplished by England or Russia. Very few people in this country would boldly answer "Russia" to that question. They desire to see it done, if absolutely necessary in the last resort, by England. But they

would rather wait and see if the chapter of accidents will bring about a stable native Government in that country, which has hitherto only developed government by distraction. They would assist any native who got the power to keep it, and in so aiding him earn his gratitude and so secure the friendly relations which have been our object all along. They would insist upon a Resident at his Court, because we must know that he does not intrigue with Russia, and in that way they would irritate their bolstered Amir, clip the very wings of his power in the eyes of his subjects, and show the string by which their puppet king was pulled, and by which his sceptre was swayed. This, we say again, is impolicy ! The time for such temporising with stern facts has gone. You must grasp the nettle ! It is too late to try to leave it alone. It will sting you if you try any half-measures. Even Sir George Campbell, who cannot be regarded as the advocate of heroic policy in Afghan affairs, says, "My experience is that if you deal with hornets only two courses are possible. One not to stir them up and aggravate them, the other to smoke them out and take the nest." In this case it is too late to say, "Don't stir them up," for that has been done ; let us take the nest and tame the hornets !

But all persons do not admit, as Sir George Campbell does, that even as a last resort we should occupy Afghanistan. Many, as we have said, still think that we have a sufficient frontier in the Indus. Those persons are, however, in their opinions without any support from military authority. Even those who, like Sir George Campbell in 1849, thought the Indus a satisfactory boundary then, have had to advance with the times and events which have been pushing us forward, and hold that something in addition would be necessary now. We know that the policy of the late Government was to rectify our frontier, and to secure a frontier which would enable us the better

to repel the shock of war when it should come. We have never been led to suppose that in that respect the present Government holds different views. We need not in the light of these facts discuss the question of our existing frontier. Many things besides events would compel us to advance. Our extreme positions, as at Peshawar, are unhealthy. We are close to most troublesome tribes, who, ever since our conquest of the Punjaub, have rendered themselves most dangerous neighbours. Our invasions of their country in retaliation for their raids have been somewhat futile military performances. But, as we said, the Indus as a frontier is no longer a practical question, and may be dismissed. Some advance is to be made. Some portions of Afghanistan are to be retained. Now there seems to be very great difference of opinion as to what points in Afghanistan we ought to continue to hold. We think it would be a fatal mistake to regard this as merely a military question. No doubt it is well to secure strong positions from a military point of view. We may have to meet a strong foe on this ground: let us choose our positions carefully. But quite apart from the military is the political question. The possession of a stronghold in the centre of Afghanistan would not be so important as the possession of a stronghold in the hearts and affections of the people of Afghanistan. We are not denying the importance of securing military *points d'appuis*, but we are insisting upon the other duty of civilising and subjugating the Afghan people. We ought not only to make Afghanistan a place of arms, but a place of peace. The rocks and hills of the country will no doubt prove defenders in case of invasion, but an orderly and law-abiding people would prove even better defences than those rugged fronts of the great mountains. As we said, we have two duties—to defend ourselves from Russia and from the Afghans. By ruling the latter

well and wisely, we shall go far to keep the aggression of the former far from our borders. But before we say what seems to us convincing as to the necessity of the occupation of the whole country, let us examine some of the most feasible suggestions which stop short of our desire.

A German writer speaks of Afghanistan as "the glacis of the fortress of Hindustan,"¹ and physically that country is admirably adapted for defence. Mountains always endow people with courage. Nature there seems in league with strategy. And in Afghanistan the features of the mountain ranges are such as to make it an almost impregnable place of arms. To the north of Afghanistan stands the Caucasian range, now known as the Hindoo Coosh, which stretches from the Himalayas in the east, into Armenia and the Russian Caucasus in the west. To the north-west the mountains rise to an enormous height, and the passes over them are from 16,000 to 17,000 feet high. Indeed, the easiest pass north-west of Cabul, leading to Bamceau and Turkestan, is a little over 12,000 feet high, and the mountains amongst which such a pass is a valley rise to a height of about 20,000 feet. This of itself is a grand rampart, and our forces in such passes would for a great part of the year be the frosts and snows. But, besides this, it is important to note that the ranges are for the most part tilled on one side, with high elevated plateaus on the other. In the case of the Himalayas the precipice is towards India, and the elevated plateau we call Tibet. But when we look at Afghanistan we find that the steep face of the mountains is to Turkestan and the Oxus, that most of the country of Afghanistan is high, rough table-land, and that it again presents a rugged and precipitous front to our Indian Empire. Such a country seems to have been made for defence against

¹ Quoted by Malleeson, p. 8.

the north, and once occupied by a foe might be used as a terrible natural fortress of offence against India, which lies at the foot of its huge ranges. The country itself would in strong hands be impregnable. It consists, as we have seen, of mountainous highlands. It is a country of fastnesses. There are very few valleys in it, and it all drains, as might have been expected from our description of its features, to the Indus. The roads through it run from west to east, and it is almost impassable from north to south. These east and west running valleys are the highways into and out of India, and those who can command these can command our Empire. Now it seems to have been the policy of the late Government, and so far as we know it is the policy of the present, to secure our safety by taking and keeping the Indian ends of these roads. The thought of the late Government seems to have been to rectify the Indian frontier by adding to our possessions command of the three great passes—the Khyber, the Bolan, and the Kurram. Now we think that there are serious objections to such a frontier. No doubt, as we said, the command of the roads is the command of India; but to command roads it is more important to possess the country on each side of them than to be posted on the roads themselves. It is to be remembered that these roads run through a very inaccessible hill country, and that that hill country is inhabited by tribes which have already proved excessively troublesome upon our existing line of front. It is a very difficult thing, in a military point of view, to hold such roads through such a hostile country; and although some able writers have recommended the absolute conquest of the hill tribes lying between these three routes, that does not seem to have been a part of the plan we are considering. That the complete subjugation of these tribes would necessarily follow, we do not for a moment doubt,

and we are strengthened in this belief by the strong opinion of Dr. Bellew;¹ but that it was no part of the scheme is, to our mind, the cause of its deficiency.

Again, as a question of military necessity three long columns ought to have means of lateral communication and support. But, in the case of these three valleys, no such communication is possible, for they are separated by inaccessible mountains. It seems somewhat strange to some competent authorities that the Gomul or Goleru pass was not chosen as a route, instead, at any rate, of the Kurram. It is said to be the principal trade route, it is said to be easy, and the fact that it is chosen by the traders would seem to indicate some such advantage, and it lies along the high land between Guznee and Quettah. The reason why it was not chosen, and a much more difficult pass was adopted, is that our authorities knew nothing or next to nothing about it. It has never been surveyed! Could any fact be more significant of the insecure position which we hold in relation to Afghanistan? We were pledged to support Afghanistan in case of foreign invasion, and yet we did not know the merits of the principal trade route between the centre of Afghanistan and India. But passing from that, to us, sad confession, and returning to the question of the occupation of these routes, we ask whether, by such an occupation, we should not be committing what seems to be the worst mistake in warfare—unduly extending our front to possible enemies? Each of these columns of possession would be nothing more than a double line of assailable front. But the question is not bare of authority, and we are glad to find so competent a critic as Lord Napier of Magdala expressing the opinion that our frontier must be beyond the hostile tribes. "It is," he says, "for the interest of the Empire that when the day for the struggle comes

¹ "Races of Afghanistan," p. 84.

we should fight our battles beyond the mountain barrier. I think it is necessary for the interests of our Indian Empire that we should advance beyond the mountain barrier and fight the battle of India outside and not inside of it." There are two reasons, as we have pointed out, why we should push on until we reach the high ground beyond the hills rather than remain in the valleys. The highlands of Afghanistan are blessed—besides the two things of which Dost Mahomed boasted its possession, viz., men and stones—with an excellent climate. This fact is not to be forgotten when we come to consider the question of occupation. The climate is exceedingly fine, and is such as produces a robust and vigorous race. But the valleys in which our columns of possession would be placed are far from healthy. Indeed, viewing the whole question, we confess we fail to see much advantage to be gained by securing these roads, and by occupying them, or strongholds along them, without, at the same time, conquering and conciliating, as Dr. Bellew proposed, the hostile tribes who make barriers worse than mountains between us and Afghanistan. In such a position we should be a source of irritation and bitterness within their borders, and such irritation and bitterness would be readily turned to evil account against us in the hands of intrigue, and we might find our three routes running through a country friendly to our enemy. It ought to be remembered, as all historians tell us, that money will rule in Afghanistan where a sceptre will not. No sovereign can have a stable throne in that country who has not a deep treasury. We have ourselves found the oil which relieves the itch of greed useful upon many occasions. A good deal of our diplomacy at Cabul has been in rupees. But what can we do in the way of bribery which will compare with the large and liberal corruption of Russia? Russia comes

there graduated in corruption after a long course of private study of its abominable methods, and, if we are content to do nothing more than occupy these routes, we should soon find them overshadowed by a foe more formidable than the Afrides or the Afghans of Khost. We must, it seems to us, be the rulers of these peoples. We must not give the outwork of our position into hostile hands. We must establish a strong Government on the high and healthy land beyond the hills, and be prepared, if need be, to fight the battle of India there. It is a truism, however, to say that the battles that are best prepared for are never fought. To be ready to fight is one way to escape war, and we are confident that nothing would be more likely to bring about a strong, permanent peace between this country and Russia than the firm establishment of our power in Afghanistan. That fact would be stronger for peace than a hundred treaties. These latter are the sport of the cunning, but the possession of an impregnable country is the security for the peace of national thieves.

There is another suggestion made short of the occupation of the country, which demands careful consideration. We are at the present time in the possession of Candahar, and it is said by many that we should secure our safety in India by retaining our hold upon that city. This has been urged upon the Government by the Patriotic Association, which is composed of many able and illustrious individuals, and their recommendation merits the careful consideration, not only of her Majesty's Government, but of every person who has the security and welfare of the Empire at heart. We say, at once, that we agree with much that is stated in the Memorial of the Association. We should be content with nothing less than what they pray for, but we should desire, for the reasons which we shall hereafter urge, more. Lord Hartington, in his reply

to the deputation which presented this Memorial, admitted that there were reasons in favour of the retention of Candahar. "I believe," he added, "that military men—though there is a great difference of opinion amongst military men themselves—are of opinion that Candahar is an important strategical point for us." Now there is no doubt that there is difference of opinion upon this as upon most points. If unanimity were the rule, statesmanship would be child's-play. It is the duty of the Government, however, to come to a conclusion as to which is the best opinion, and we cannot help thinking, notwithstanding his lordship's guarded expression, that they believe, what most competent authorities hold, that Candahar is an all-important point of vantage in a military point of view, or, in the words of the Memorial, "Its strategic position and its defensive capabilities render Candahar a military *point d'appui* of enormous value. In a word, Candahar is the key of Afghanistan, as Afghanistan is the key of British India. Garrisoned by British troops, it would be an impregnable bulwark of the Empire." Upon this point we neither possess the local knowledge nor the military skill requisite to be in a position to give an independent opinion. We can only weigh the evidence and express our conviction as to the weight and authority of that on the one side or on the other. There is no lack of materials. The opinions which have been expressed have been innumerable, and many of them have more foundation in desire than in reason; but, with due allowance for prejudice, we cannot but come to the conclusion at which, as we say, the Government has evidently arrived, that in so far as military matters in India are concerned it would be very important that Candahar should be in our hands. We have spoken of the west- and east-running routes in Afghanistan. Candahar commands the most important of these. Competent critics hold

that the conquest of India will come through Herat and Candahar, and indeed it is a historical fact that all the great conquerors of Hindostan have approached it by Candahar. The position of the town is such that it not only dominates this route, but commands the whole of the fertile country by which it is surrounded. But looked at in other aspects besides the military one, the continued occupation of Candahar is very important. The inhabitants are peaceful and industrious, and dislike the tyrannical rule of the dominant Afghans. The best rulers are those who can govern themselves, but the characteristic of the Afghan is, as Dr. Bellew says, that he is not "fit to govern himself or others and badly wants a master."¹ We believe that our continued occupation would be not only just, as it would relieve the oppressed, but popular. The memorialists of the Patriotic Association assured the Government that all classes in Candahar would regret our withdrawal. Then it is not only a military point of vantage, but a commercial stronghold. The district is, as we said, fertile, and the people industrious. The railway which is made to Quettah could, we believe without difficulty, be extended to Candahar, and as Candahar commands the trade routes from Persia and Central Asia to India, the traffic in wool, minerals, dyes, and wheat, which are all abundant products of the country, would soon be great. In a trading nation it would be fatal to us to have these routes in the hands of an enemy; and the weakness which has characterised the hands that held them, and would again hold them if we withdrew—that is our enemy. While there is weakness in these Afghan Courts, there is room for Russian intrigue, and where Russian intrigue goes to-day, Russian arms will go to-morrow. No better field for British enterprise offers itself anywhere, and British enterprise will

¹ "Races of Afghanistan," p. 55.

do as much to frustrate Russian intrigue as British arms. In the long run the yard-measure is as powerful as the sword. We know that the Russian conquests in Central Asia have curtailed our trade in that direction; we know, too, it is a political axiom, that our trade follows our flag, and if our flag waves permanently at Candahar we might recoup ourselves for those losses, we might develop the industries of the country, increase the already considerable revenue of Candahar, find markets for ourselves, and open our own markets and those of Europe to products which at present find no consumers. All these advantages seem to urge the necessity of the continued military occupation of Candahar, and of the political union of that country with our Indian Empire. The minimising argument of Lord Hartington, that it would be very difficult to hold Candahar, that it would require a large force, say 10,000 or 15,000 men, and that possibly these might be more usefully employed in other ways for the protection of India, had been to some extent met by anticipation by the memorialists; for they pointed out that "three-fourths of the troops required could be drawn from the large force we have been compelled to maintain on the frontier." But if it is true that the occupation of a town and district like Candahar would imply not only a large force of occupation, but a large force as protection to our communications, that only indicates the advantage of the larger scheme which we have not hesitated to recommend. Unruly neighbours require a larger police force than the same neighbours would require if they were once subjected to the discipline of law. We do not leave robbers at liberty, merely making our bolts secure—we incarcerate them; and the incarceration of the unruly population of Afghanistan in the bands of strong equal laws would be the surest and cheapest way of securing peace upon our borders.

It is a fact which has been long recognised, as we have seen, that self-defence compels a civilised nation to encroach upon an uncivilised one, or upon, to use the words of Russian excuse, populations of a predatory and nomadic character. Even if we do not do it in Russian fashion, by spike and gun, we do it by commerce and trade, and, as the history of the Indians of North America shows, the latter are often not less deadly than the former. We have in the past kept a large establishment on the borders of Afghanistan: these might be well used in putting an end once for all to the lawlessness of the Afghans. "Subjugation," says Dr. Bellew, "is what is required for the Afghan. . . . With him subjugated, all the races of the country will be easily controlled and governed."¹ Surely, then, it would be better to attempt this radical measure, which will put an end to the firebrands in that land, give peace within the boundaries of the country, and, as in the play Mephistopheles shrinks before the cross-shaped hilt of the swords rather than the points, it is before sacred peace that Russia will fall back.

But when we propose the annexation either of Candahar or of the country as a whole, we are met by Lord Hartington's argument that we have no right to do such a thing. We have not been asked by the inhabitants to annex Candahar, and "although they have acquiesced in our presence more peaceably and willingly than other Afghan tribes, I do not know what evidence there is that the people of Candahar would be at all willing to submit permanently to our rule. . . . It seems to me it would require a very strong reason, almost the absolute necessity of self-preservation, to give us any right or title to annex an unwilling population on which we have made war, and which has done, so far as I am aware, nothing to entitle us to destroy its independence." This raises,

¹ "Races of Afghanistan," p. 53.

no doubt, some very important questions. First, one of fact. Should we destroy the independence of a race? Is it true that the people of Candahar are independent? Surely Lord Hartington is aware that they are ruled by the Afghans, that they suffer under the tyranny and oppression of an alien race. We should deprive the Afghans of the independence which enables them to enslave a peace-loving people; and in doing so, we need scarcely wait for a formal invitation. We cannot doubt that the withdrawal of our troops from Candahar would expose the industrious inhabitants to anarchy, which in Afghanistan is compatible with tyranny. Are we still to hesitate for a formal resolution to justify our possession, a possession which has not only been acquiesced in, but which has been accepted with pleasure by the people? But besides the question of fact, there is one of principle. The self-preservation, which Lord Hartington must mean, can scarcely be preservation in immediate peril; but preservation in any peril which may in the clear future-looking view of reason be imminent. Statesmanship must look before and after. The real policy of the nation must be one which embraces not to-day only, but to-morrow. If all the virtues are prudence, all statesmanship is forethought. Now we cannot but think that the self-preservation involved in the question of British India and the advance of Russia is sufficiently imminent to justify any measures which may avert the result of Russian designs on the ground of piratical policy. We have already seen a Russian mission at the Court of Cabul, at a time when the Amir refused to receive a similar emissary from our Viceroy. Is it not time to think of self-preservation? Are we to be again and again hoodwinked by Russian assurances that she has "no intention of going further south," that "extension of territory is extension of weakness," and that Afghanistan is beyond the region in which

she might be called to exercise her influence. The time for blind credulity in such promises is past. From the beginning to the end of our fumbling diplomacy we have had in view the great power which was approaching India on the north-west, and which might at any time be upon our borders, not only with her own strength, but with the magnificent cavalry of Central Asia and the forces of Afghanistan to assist her in her enterprises. The course of conquest widens as it flows, and it is doubted by few who take a large view of history, who have made themselves acquainted with the past of Russia, that she will desire above all things to find a way to the south, to emigrate from the perpetual winter which broods upon her own vast domains to that perpetual summer which smiles upon the country which is the pride of Asia, the cradle of history, the darling of the sun—India! With such facts before us, we cannot but think that the question of self-preservation is not as remote as the Secretary of State for India would have us believe. We must provide against the dangers which are to come. It will be too late to prepare when they are here. Are they not sufficiently imminent to justify the retention of Candahar—to justify, if need be, the annexation of Afghanistan? Those who have read this essay with agreement or conviction will answer that question in the affirmative.

But there is another serious principle involved in Lord Hartington's reply to the deputation. He asserts that our right to annex depends upon the wish of the inhabitants. That seems to be assumed by his Lordship as an axiom. But it is an axiom which was not recognised by those who undertook a war with a view to rectify our frontier. There was no thought then of asking the permission of the wild tribes whose country we meant to occupy. But if the right to annex is to depend upon the wish

of the inhabitants, the right to continue our existing connection must similarly, we should say, depend upon a continuity of a desire to remain connected. In that case, has not Ireland a right to dissociate itself from England? It can scarcely be doubted that a majority of the inhabitants of that country would hail the repeal of the Union as a relief from Saxon oppression. Is their wish for such a "liberation" a sufficient reason to bring the question of disunion within the range of practical policy? Would it be possible for England to secure her own safety with a free Ireland at her side? Besides, the freedom of a country is not a guarantee of immunity from outrage, and might not Ireland become to-morrow the prey of some ambitious European statesman, who was less scrupulous to consult the wishes of those whom he conquered? What would England say, if Ireland, whom she had generously divorced on account of incompatibility of temper, was married "by capture" to some foe? Would not England repent her resolution? But, besides, if the rule is good for Ireland, why not for Scotland, why not for Yorkshire? Are we to have England under a renaissance heptarchy? Or are we to stop until we put an end to all government, and have every individual a kingdom as well as a law unto himself? No! there are more paramount claims upon the consideration of a great Government than the desire of every little community or body of persons. "We must," as Bacon says, "do a little injustice to get much justice." People in civilised communities sacrifice liberties to enjoy liberty. And the mere desire of an ungoverned and ungovernable tribe of half-savage conquering Afghans must not be allowed to stand in the way of the Imperial policy of this great nation, which will result in the welfare, the peace, the happiness of millions.

Most people, then, as we have seen, seem to think

we ought to retain some permanent hold upon Afghanistan. We have seen what views were entertained by the late Government. We have considered the proposal of the Patriotic Association. Sir George Campbell thinks that either Quettah, or some better cantonment in that part of the country, should be permanently occupied in strength, and connected with India (p. 62), and still thinks, as he did in 1849, that we ought to hold what he calls a "porter's lodge" in the Khyber. But, as we have seen, in the last resort he would be willing to take the high land and hold Guznee and the country about it. Then many writers think with Lord Napier that the battle must be fought beyond the mountains, and several competent authorities believe very firmly that these are only palliatives, that they are only steps on a road on which there is no stopping, and that we must ultimately annex the whole country.¹ Again, during Lord Lawrence's Governor-Generalship, a memorandum of Sir H. Rawlinson, which has been often referred to in this discussion, was sent to India to elicit the opinion of Anglo-Indian civil and military authorities. Lord Lawrence's despatch contains minutes and memoranda of a large number of such officials who had special knowledge and experience of the frontier question. They differ from one another in many ways, but they all agree in recognising the immense danger to India of a hostile Cabul. Where, then, are we to find firm advice amongst such counsellors? The Indus as a frontier is abandoned. We must have a hold on Afghanistan, and any hold but a grasp will irritate the inhabitants, and continue an enmity which our wars have rooted. We have conquered the country—why should we not keep it? The very diversity of the advice shows that there is no one hold which will satisfy all the requirements we have in view. We must not be content

¹ "Races of Afghanistan," p. 10; "Kandahar in 1879," p. 279; "Letters on Afghan Affairs in 1880," p. 13.

with a scientific frontier, with Candahar, Guznee, or Cabul: we must hold the whole country! This is no cold-blooded advice to go to war and shed innocent blood in order that we may possess ourselves of the land. The war has been fought! It was forced upon us, and it is past! The blood has been spilt, the country has no ruler. The news of the treachery at Cabul is too common to sell an evening paper. The country is lawless, and the crimes of anarchy cry for government. Why should we hesitate to give the country the rule it requires? The Afghans who so much require to be subjugated are those turbulent neighbours of ours in the east; but the western Afghans, who are more pastoral in their habits, more content to live by their own flocks than on the flocks of others, require our protection. They have less of that "fierce independence" which Sir George Campbell relies upon as a barrier between India and Russia. The weak are always those who are the earliest prey.

"Men always hate the man that's great,
Nor cease to fall on him that's small."

Hence there is another necessity for the annexation of the whole rather than the mere occupation of some stronghold which might make us safe while it would leave those peaceful peoples at the mercy of aggression where no mercy is! It is no injustice this, but justice of the best type—to relieve the oppressed, to displace the tyrannous, to govern a people for their own benefit. A strong Government of Afghanistan from native sources is, we believe, impossible; and consequently we cannot but regard the wish which Mr. Gladstone expressed at the Mansion House "to restore the independence of the people of the country" as Utopian. It would be as hopeful to give back his independence and razors to a suicide, as to hope for friendly relations from them. Afghanistan must in the future be governed either by

England or Russia. At present we have the possession, and no one could say "no." But if we withdraw, and hereafter we see the necessity more clearly to propose to do then what we ought to do now, Russia may be in a position to dispute our right, and then the battle must be fought in a hostile, instead of a friendly country. Are we then to allow things to revert to their former condition—to allow this hot-water spring, Afghanistan, to bubble on our frontier and embroil us with our great neighbour, or are we ready to take some risk, some expense,¹ some responsibility for the benefit of the people, for the quiet of our borders, for the defence of India, for the welfare of the whole Empire?

It is sad that imperial concerns—concerns which transcend the limits of country and have to do with the interests, not of a country or a nation, but humanity, should be judged of in a spirit of petty parochialism. The interests involved in this large measure which we advocate are not selfish. England's greatness dispenses with a few hundred miles of mountainous country. Her dominions will scarcely be appreciably extended by this trivial annexation. True, her commerce will increase; but what is the commerce of Afghanistan to the mart of the world? We assume responsibilities by this action, rather than appropriate rights. We are willing to spend rather than reap. But we must have a rest from the troublous policy of years, which has directed anxiety continually to our north-west frontier. We shall then have subjects to whom we can bring the blessings of peace, and who will learn the great resources of their rich country. We shall have done with the petty intrigues of years for the stakes—the friendship of a savage—and we shall be face to face with Russia, and put a limit to her unresting progress and southern ambition. It will be a strange meeting

¹ Money spent in that way "would be more efficacious than money spent in subsidies." ("Letters on Afghan Affairs," p. 13.)

on that rugged boundary-line, the meeting of liberty and oppression—of a free country and a country of slaves, of a military nation with a commercial people, of civilisation with benightedness—of progress with retrogression !

Every one who is familiar with the history which we have suggested rather than sketched—a history which is amply recorded in the works to which we have referred in this essay, and as it has been narrated in these pages, all who know the painful efforts which we have made during the last thirty years to oust Russia by friendly art from Cabul and to obtain an amicable hold upon Afghanistan, would be glad to hear that the entanglement of these threads of policy, which ended in a knot, which we cut by war, was at an end. We have in the past argued as much from the purse as from the reason—why should we become misers now? All our arguments from purse and pen ended in estrangement from England, ended in alliance with Russia, in war ! We have made a clean sweep—let us begin a new policy, let us settle the Afghan question once for all by retaining the firm and peaceful hold of British rule upon the country which so urgently requires good government.

III

THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE¹

SIR Bartle Frere, whose name is honourably associated with the Zanzibar Treaty of 1873,² in giving evidence before the Select Committee which reported in favour of the measure which was subsequently entrusted to him to carry out, said: "Up to about the time when Lord Palmerston died, for many years the general opinion of all parties in England had been in favour of a determination to put a stop to the slave trade wherever we could possibly do so without infringing the rights of other nations, and the whole weight of the Government influence had been put on the side of suppressing the slave trade. But of late years it has been manifest that there has been very considerable wavering of our own opinions upon the subject." . . . "That seems to me to be the cardinal evil with which we have to contend, and our Government, representing public opinion, appears to me of late years to have been half-hearted in the matter."³

¹ "The Report from the Select Committee on Slave Trade (East Coast of Africa), together with the Proceedings of the Committee. Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index, 1871." "Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and on the Eastern Coast of Africa." By Captain G. L. Sullivan, R.N., late Commander of H.M.S. *Daphne*. London, 1873. "Ismailia, a Narrative of the Expedition to Central Africa for the Suppression of the Slave Trade. Organised by Ismail, Khedive of Egypt." By Sir Samuel W. Baker, Pacha, M.A., F.R.S., &c. In 2 vols. London, 1874. "The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, from 1865 to his Death." In 2 vols. London, 1874.

² This treaty was signed at Zanzibar on the 5th of June 1873, and was presented to both Houses of Parliament during the session of 1874.

³ See Minutes of Evidence, Question 448. Livingstone, too, has the following words in his "Last Journals" (vol. ii. pp. 9 and 10): "The emancipation

To us it seems that there can be no doubt that England is half-hearted in this matter, as in most things at the present time. The spirit of the times is lazy and indolent. There is no fire in politics, no enthusiasm in philanthropy, no earnestness in literature. We are told that England wants to rest. The reforms of recent times have taken her short breath away. She has brought to the birth so many great measures that she lies exhausted, and a do-nothing policy or ingenious inaction is to take the place of strenuous endeavours to make this world better and wiser. All the work in that direction is not yet done—nay, it never can be done—yet we have all made up our minds that the time has come for the folding of the hands and the closing of the eyes. When in the life of a man does such a time as this come? When can any one say, My work is done, let me take my rest? Not in this life, of a truth, but when this life comes to be laid down. Work is there to do for every hand that can do it, for every eye that can see it; it is the impotent and the blind to whom holiday times come, to the wise and earnest man there are none such here. So to a country it may be that the do-nothing policy is a sign of incapacity. It is the old and decrepit who can sit for hours with vacant thought enjoying their shallow vitality, it is the young who feel the inspiration of strength which prompts to labour and whose spirit is

of our West Indian slaves was the work of but a small number of the people of England—the philanthropists and all the more advanced thinkers. Numerically they were a very small minority of the population and powerful only from the superior abilities of the leading men, and from having the right, the true, and just on their side. Of the rest of the population an immense number were indifferent, who had no sympathies to spare for any beyond their own fireside circles. In the course of time sensation writers came up on the surface of society, and by way of originality they condemned almost every measure and person of the past. ‘Emancipation was a mistake,’ and these fast writers drew along with them a large body who would fain be slave traders themselves,” &c.

stirred within them by the thrilling consciousness of this heaven-gift. But half-hearted of a truth we are at the present time, and in nothing is this deformity more palpably shown than in connection with our feeble efforts in relation to the African slave trade. If anything was likely to stir England to a grand and fierce indignation, an indignation which would vent itself not in loose words merely but in firm acts, surely it was the facts connected with that trade in human bodies and human souls which was carried on in the full face of the blushing sun, in lands which his presence blessed with fertility beyond most. If any circumstances were calculated to arm men's souls with stern wrath, and make men in that fine rage as terrible as God's, it was those which were brought to light in connection with the trade in slaves which was carried on between the east coast of Africa and the coasts of Persia and Arabia. We have had ample evidence about this, and there has long ceased to be any necessity for any further inquiry, but there has long been an urgent necessity for the action which ought to result from conviction. Yet all our action has been limp. We have been like retired business men who with empty days upon their hands attempt to fill them with a little fussy philanthropy, who attend committee meetings with a view to organising charities, or shoe-black brigades, or such like, and in this way endeavour to kill time and benefit humanity. But it is not by such action that these times, full of many things which demand reform by their huge hideousness and deformity, are to be bettered, and it is not by such action as England has taken in relation to the African slave trade, that this haggard abuse of power, which is an offence to all men with true human hearts, will be put an end to. But no more thorough measures seem to be forthcoming, although many promises issue from the fecund repository of those who wield the power. These circum-

stances, which to our thinking are full of cause for regret, are, we feel certain, due to the half-heartedness which we have noted.

In some circles it has become popular to regard slavery as an incident inseparable from a certain stage of civilisation, and every futile effort which has been made to put an end to it, is pointed to in proof of this hypothesis. It is argued that it is quixotic to attempt to put an end to this institution which is indissolubly connected with every phase of social life in Africa, and that such men as Baker, who bravely endeavoured to put an end to this horrible traffic by conducting with wise endurance and prudent skill an expedition into the very heart of the slave-hunting district of the Soudan and Upper Nile; or Livingstone, who thought to bring men to see the strength of love and the weakness of force, by telling them of the story of the Book which has been more powerful in the world than many armies; or Schweinfurth,¹ who seems to think that the cure for that indigenous disease of commerce will be found in immigrations of the Chinese, are, notwithstanding their bravery and endurance, notwithstanding their incalculable benefactions to humanity with white skins, but drivelling dabbles in the science of civilisation, and that the efforts of men and nations are powerless against the institutions which are the result of the evolution or dissolution of a people or a race. This dismal fatalism would, if those who profess its tenets logically carried them out to their legitimate conclusion, result in a paralysis of all effort. But there is a logic which makes theirs ridiculous, and common sense and rational experience teach us that a man may defy fate; that men may and do influence their fellows,

¹ "The Heart of Africa: Three Years' Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa, from 1868 to 1871." By Dr. George Schweinfurth. Translated by Ellen E. Frewer. With an Introduction by Winwood Reade. London, 1873.

and that that influence is oftentimes more powerful than that of isothermal lines or the character of the soil ; that the grand evolution of humanity results from a natural selection of mind from mind ; that men become better and nobler from their intercourse with others who are nobler and better than they. "I know few more sublime ideas," says Fichte, "than the idea of this universal interaction of the whole human race on itself ; this ceaseless life and activity ; this eager emulation to give and to receive,—the noblest strife in which man can take a part ; this general indentation of countless wheels into each other whose common motive-power is freedom, and the beautiful harmony which is the result of all. 'Whoever thou art'—may each of us say—'whoever thou art, if thou bear the form of man, thou too art a member of this great commonwealth:—through what countless media soever our mutual influence may be transmitted, still by that title I act upon thee and thou on me ; no one who bears the stamp of reason on his front, however rudely impressed, exists in vain for me. But I know thee not—thou knowest not me ! Oh, so surely as we have a common calling to be good—even to become better—so surely, though millions of ages may first pass away (what is time ?), so surely shall a period at last arrive when I may receive thee too into my sphere of action, —when I may do good to thee and receive good from thee in return ; when my heart may be united to thine also, by the fairest possible bond—a mutual interchange of free and generous love.'"

These are no random words thrown out in the spume of tempestuous oratory, but wise, deep, calm words which bear pertinently upon the matter which we have here in hand. How are these poor human beings, on whose black fronts the stamp of reason is, although rudely, impressed, whose lives are frittered in endless wars with their black neighbours, incited by the ivory

and slave seekers who torment the rich centre of that sultry continent by their presence ; and who by these wars fill the ivory stores and the slave pens and leashes of their Arab allies—how are these to be brought to feel the influence of a Europe not free, not united in generous love, yet still with some reason in its head and some love in its heart ? How are the poor slaves who are harnessed in the cruel slave-sticks, or driven in droves through the tangled solitudes of Central Africa to the coast, and of whom four out of every five, and in some cases nine out of every ten, are killed or die before they reach the coast, and are close-packed in ships for export—how are these to be set free from their slavery ? How are they to be united to us in that fair bond ? This is not a matter which interests those only who are thus driven to market. True, it is terrible enough to think of these ! We see the gang driven by Arabs who press them to journeys beyond their strength, and who, when these fall down weary in the toilsome march, or sick from want and disease, raise cruel weapons over them and kill those they cannot profit by, that none other may profit by the slave. Surely the vultures which are hidden by the blue distances overhead, and whose keen eyes have seen the tragedy, will spare that poor corpse. All this is terrible enough. Terrible, too, the story of those who, having arrived at the coast through the corpse-strewn wilderness,¹ are packed on three close decks of wicker-

¹ That this is not an exaggeration will be evident from the following extract from the Report of the Slave Trade Committee of 1869, which sat at the Foreign Office. “ The horrors attending this long journey have been fully described by Dr. Livingstone and others. The slaves are marched in gangs, the males with their necks yoked in heavy forked sticks, which at night are fastened to the ground, or lashed together so as to make escape impossible. The women and children are bound with thongs. Any attempt at escape, or to untie their bonds, or any wavering or lagging on the journey, has but one punishment, immediate death. The sick are left behind, and the route of a slave caravan can be tracked by the dying and the dead.”

work in small and reeking boats, called Dhows,¹ where they are supplied with a handful of rice and scant drops of water, on their terrible voyage. Many die of course in their cramped sitting posture, and these corpses have to be weeded out from time to time by the Arabs from amongst those slaves which have still life in them. No pleasant picture that. The wickerwork decks on which the slaves crouch close together in foul darkness, and which are so close the one to the other that the slaves cannot sit upright, visited by the savage masters come to remove the dead which have fallen cold against the envious living! But although the plight of these is terrible enough, we know not that the plight of those who have power thus to inflict such tortures, is not worse. They too are men. They too have a claim upon Europe, upon humanity. They too must be brought under the influence of what divinity is in man. Not only must the slaves be liberated, those who drive them must be set free. The chains of these latter may be more difficult to strike off than those of the former, the emancipation of these from their own diabolic natures may be more difficult than the emancipation of those from the slave-sticks with their cruel prongs, and the cords which bind them. But the question is not one of ease or difficulty, it is one of right. It is not one of choice, it is one of necessity. It must be done. Nay, it is, we are convinced, although slowly and uncertainly, being done, and we have in the works before us some records of the work. It is as yet feeble enough. Government for a long time failed to see that its casual cruisers upon

¹ These Bugalas or Dhows are low-prowed ships employed in the East Africa coasting trade. They are ugly, and look like ships sinking bow foremost. In many instances they are quite unseaworthy and have to choose still seas to sail upon. The legitimate East African trade is undoubtedly increasing, but for a long time human beings were the staple commodity, and the other merchandise carried by these inshore vessels was usually only a mask worn over the real features of this ugly commerce.

the east coast of Africa were doing more harm than good, while the number of slaves which were annually exported *viâ* Zanzibar was calculated as varying from 20,000 to 56,000. In no year did the English cruisers succeed in liberating more than 1117 slaves from captured dhows. That number was reached under exceptional circumstances in 1869, but in many years the success of these operations was not nearly so great. In 1867 only 431 slaves were emancipated.¹ But if we consider the means which were adopted with a view to the suppression of this trade, the smallness of the result will not be a cause for wonder. In the first place, in the opinion of every naval officer of experience, the number of the ships stationed on the east coast of Africa was too small to permit of any thorough suppression of the trade. In the second place, the appliances with which these were provided were inadequate to the work they had to do. One of the most common incidents in the experience of those who have chased dhows in the Indian Ocean, is the intentional grounding of these ships.² The Arabs, whenever hotly pressed by a cruiser, run their ships ashore, and having assured the slaves that the white men will eat the black if they catch them, they induce their slaves to escape to the shore and scatter in the woods. To prevent these tactics, by means of which very large numbers of slaves were kept from the liberating hands of England, some specially adapted boats or steam-launches for inshore service were absolutely necessary. This had suggested itself long ago to all those who were familiar with the subject, yet it remained to be recommended by the Select Committee of 1871, and we are uncertain whether even now their suggestion has been adopted.

¹ See evidence of Admiral Sir L. Heath before the Select Committee, Question 685.

² See "Slave-Catching in the Indian Ocean." By Captain Colomb. London, 1873.

Again, the utter ignorance, in relation to the language, of those who were employed in boarding these ships was a serious obstacle to the discovery of the truth. The Home Government had done several things to impede the action of those who were sent out to suppress the slave trade. The Admiralty in 1869 issued Instructions for the Guidance of Naval Officers employed in the Suppression of the Slave Trade, and amongst these there is an order that vessels having slaves on board, if there are attendant circumstances showing that the slaves are not being transported for the purpose of being sold as slaves, are not to be detained. But these instructions go further, and give a definition of domestic slaves which are not to be regarded as a reason for detaining the ship in which they are. "Where the slaves found on board are very few in number, are unconfined, and appear to be on board for the purpose of loading or working the ship, or attending upon the master or the passengers, and there is no other evidence that the vessel is engaged in or equipped for the slave trade," these slaves are to be looked upon as domestic slaves, or as slaves not being transported for the purpose of being sold. This impeding regulation must have been framed in considerable ignorance of the whole subject. According to the best opinions there are no distinguishing features about the dhows which are employed in the slave trade, nothing which could indicate equipment for that service, except perhaps in some instances the bamboo deck to which we have referred. The attendant circumstances then are not to be relied upon.

Further, as to the small number of the slaves on board, the test is fallacious. The immense number of vessels which are employed in the coasting trade make distribution of slaves in very small companies easy, and if immunity was to be secured by reason of the smallness of the number of slaves on board, this dis-

tribution would be the inevitable result. It has been calculated that if six slaves were carried by each of the ships passing north from Zanzibar to Arabia and Persia, a larger number of slaves than are annually transported from the former port could be easily conveyed. In this way our cruisers would be as useless in the Indian Ocean as the guardships in some of our rivers. But again, the further test supplied by the Admiralty is also useless. The unconfined condition of the slaves was no test, for the Arabs had a way of confining them as effectually as if they had been swathed in cords, by means of threats which could not be perceived by any English lieutenant who might board the dhow. They were known to be in the habit of passing off some of the slaves on board as passengers and many as servants, while they were in reality being conveyed to northern ports for sale. The officers whose duty it was to inspect these ships had no means of judging of the truthfulness of these assertions. They knew nothing of the language, and when in more recent times prudence suggested the employment of an interpreter, there was no means of securing his honesty and fidelity, and in many instances he took bribes from the Arabs, and in some cases was personally interested in the trade, to assist in the suppression of which he was employed. On the whole then, the means which were adopted on the sea were ill calculated to put an end to the slave trade. It is not to be wondered at that the results were eminently unsatisfactory.

Upon land the expedients were not much better. About thirty years ago there was a treaty with Muscat which has not had the effect of putting an end to the trade, and one of the reasons why that treaty proved futile was that it allowed domestic slavery on board trading ships, which at once suggested itself as a ready means of evading condemnation. That it did prove futile is beyond doubt. It was evaded not only

by the traders on the coast, but it was evaded on land by the authorities, and every pretext was had recourse to with the view of preventing its operating in the way intended. After twenty-five years of futility we find a Committee sitting to inquire and report as to the means best adapted to put an end to that horrible trade; we find it being assured that "to put down this trade requires far more effort and far more energy than England has yet shown in the matter" . . . that "we must force the Government of Zanzibar into active acquiescence in our views, and, if necessary, purchase or take possession of that island";¹ and by another competent witness that "he did not think any treaty would have the slightest effect; treaties with Arabs are mere waste-paper."² And yet what has been done? Up to that time the consular establishments were far too few in number to be of the use they might otherwise have been in connection with the cruisers on the coast, and the Committee very properly recommended an increase in the consular establishments. Before that time English subjects within the dominions of the Sultan, where was situated the "running sore," as Livingstone has called this lurid commerce, had not been prevented owning and trafficking in slaves, and a Captain Fraser, a retired Indian officer, possessed a very large number of slaves, a circumstance which no doubt largely conduced to dissatisfaction upon the part of the natives who saw England burning dhows, and yet saw an Englishman's factories and plantations served by the labour of slaves. This also has been put an end to. Further, the Committee being of opinion that all legitimate means should be used to put an end to the East African slave trade, recommended the abrogation of the old treaty and the substitution of a new treaty. That recommendation has

¹ Evidence of Admiral Sir L. Heath, Question 711.

² Evidence of Major-General C. P. Rigby, Question 609.

been given effect to, and a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade has been entered into between Her Majesty and the Sultan of Zanzibar.¹ This, although it is something in the right direction, is not much. We have seen that, according to the opinion of Major-General Rigby, treaties with Arabs are mere waste-paper, and that is an opinion which is entertained by many who have had large opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Arab character and the slave trade; and we have past experience of the way in which the Sultan performed his duty under the treaty which this new agreement was the means of abrogating. But even with the best will in the world, it appears that the Sultan of Zanzibar is really very powerless. Captain Sullivan, in speaking of the propriety of landing most of the liberated slaves at Zanzibar and placing them under the jurisdiction of the Sultan, on the understanding that His Highness will afford them sufficient protection against the slave-dealers, and will prevent their again becoming slaves, a course which had been suggested by the late Lord Clarendon,² and of which Captain Sullivan strenuously, and for good reasons, disapproves, says: "His Highness is unable to prevent his own slaves being stolen and kidnapped by hundreds annually, by the northern Arabs; and, however willing he might be, he is unable to give such guarantee, and

¹ Signed at Zanzibar, 2nd June 1873. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1874. That treaty, after speaking of the former treaties, provides for their abrogation, and the remainder of the first article runs as follows: "His Highness the Sultan binds himself to the best of his ability to make an effectual arrangement throughout his dominions to prevent and abolish the same. And any vessel engaged in the transport or conveyance of slaves after this date shall be liable to seizure and condemnation by all such naval officers and other officers and agents and such courts as may be authorised for that purpose on the part of Her Majesty." The second article provides for the closing of the public slave markets, the third for the protection of liberated slaves. The fourth prohibits natives of Indian States under British protection from possessing or acquiring slaves.

² Letter from Lord Clarendon to the British Consul at Zanzibar, dated 16th June 1870.

further he is a cunning Arab, and is not to be trusted.”¹ No very promising foundations these for a treaty—powerlessness and wile.

There is still something more to be done, it seems to us, to prevent this trade, to suppress this traffic, and in the half-hearted condition of England we cannot expect that that will be soon set about.² That some less docile measures would be justified with these men-stealers we cannot but think. Emergency is a reason for an abrogation of politeness. No ceremony with the man who has murdered his fellow, but off with him to the punishment which the calmness of a dispassionate judge and a jury of his fellows has declared to be his desert. We do not “keep our hands off” the brute who with force is kneading the features of the face of the woman he calls his wife, and whose weakness was given to his protection by the most sacred of all trust-deeds—marriage. No, such actions call for force, and while there are sparks of justice in us which can be fanned to flame and illumine the world with sudden lights they shall have it. Surely then in this other case the whole world has said that this thing must cease, that England will rather do without paper-knives and billiard balls than encourage the trade in slaves,³ that these family wars which are

¹ “Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters,” p. 277.

² The Queen’s Speech at the opening of the present session of Parliament contained this sentence: “The exertions of my naval and consular servants in the suppression of the East African slave trade have not been relaxed, and I confidently trust that they will bring about the complete extinction of a traffic equally repugnant to humanity and injurious to legitimate commerce.” This, however, only hints at old remedies which have failed before.

³ The trade in ivory and in slaves are intimately associated. Ivory is the principal product of Central Africa, and in many cases it is bought from the headmen of the tribes by the slave currency, or in other words slaves are exchanged for tusks. It is calculated that the amount of ivory which is annually imported into Great Britain alone would imply the destruction of 44,000 elephants per annum. (Livingstone’s “Last Journals,” vol. ii. p. 90.) A sad fact this when it is remembered that the elephant would be one of the most efficient means of carrying civilisation into Africa.

fomented by fierce and greedy traders, and which are the means of filling the slave markets of Persia and Arabia, shall cease, and that this herding of men through the rich country which ought to blossom like a garden, but which lies dank and feverish under its unhealthy rankness and desolate luxuriance of vegetation, upon a journey sometimes lasting from three to four months from the great lakes to the sea, that this commerce in humanity must end.

Surely the trial of these thieves of human beings has lasted long enough. Surely we have here in those books enough of evidence deposed to by faithful men. Shall we go on frittering away time in further inquiry? shall other committees be appointed? have we not made up our minds that these tragedies have been acted long enough upon that stage which is draped and lit for the comedy of nature, and that the time has come when they shall be utterly abolished?¹ Let us take some steps then! Are we to have a non-intervention policy between murderers and their victims? If so we are art and part with the former, and to be art and part with the latter were too good a fate for us.

But we cannot believe that that will long be the attitude of the people of England. Individual men have done what they could even to the sacrifice of their own lives, and the time is surely not far off when the whole people will rise as one man and insist upon the insufferableness of these transactions, which are none the less their concern that they take place in Africa, and will see their way to bring force to bear upon force, to cure all these petty wars with one huge war, and to give peace and prosperity to a land which basks in summer and which has in its earth untold

¹ "It is not a trade," says Livingstone ("Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 11), "but a system of consecutive murdering; they (the Arabs) go to plunder and kidnap, and every trading trip is nothing but a foray."

riches not only of the shining and glittering sort, but of the black and useful sort—a land which has iron and coal, which has inland seas for the commerce of the lands, which would grow rapid harvests under the warm suns and the rich rains, and which would become a new world in the heart of the old. This would be a crusade worthy of the nineteenth century, which has a tendency to pilgrimages and goes by rail to Pontigny. To rescue what is fast becoming through this trade in men a desolation and a sepulchre, and make it a city full of palaces—that is what we must look forward to, and not only look, but work forward to. Some men have shown us the way, and in these books before us we have the records of their doings.

Sir Samuel Baker had in his earlier journeys in Africa, which he described in his pleasant works, “The Albert Nyanza” and “The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia,” become familiar with all the features of the slave trade of the Upper Nile, and not only had his sense of justice and mercy been outraged by the scenes of which he was the witness, but he had become impressed with the belief that, although Central Africa was amenable to the influence of civilisation and was calculated to advance rapidly to a condition of prosperity, the trade in men was an obstacle to any moral or material improvement, and must at all costs be put an end to. Sir Samuel Baker does not seem to have appreciated the indissoluble connection which in the opinion of many exists between the slave and ivory trades, and his object seems to have been to put an end to the former, with a view to the continuance and extension of the latter. Whether these two could be dissociated or not we are not in a position to say, but it seems to us that the suppression of both trades would be an incalculable benefit to the Soudan and to Central Africa, and that if civilisation is to make her progress into Central Africa

at all, it will in all probability be on the back of an elephant. It is evident that the slave trade is depopulating the country, and year by year the raids of the marauding Arabs have to be extended further and further inland, and the hardships of travel are more felt by the herds of slaves who are driven to the coast. It is not much use civilising a depopulated country. But even supposing the slave trade ceased, supposing the intertribal wars which are incident to this trade were no longer waged, and the people became, what Livingstone points out they have a strong tendency to become, agriculturists, surely elephant hunting would not be their best trade, while the elephant tamed and used as a beast of burden would be invaluable in relation to traffic. No conditions tend more surely to the development and civilisation of mankind than settled work, with facilities for intercommunication and the exchange of commodities. These would be afforded by the pursuit of agriculture and by the domestication of the elephant. A hunter of Sir Samuel Baker's skill, and the zest which is associated with it, may be forgiven for forgetting the utility of the elephant as a domestic animal, and remembering the excitement of putting one of his own explosive shells from a No. 8 Reilly just where he meant to put it, and seeing the huge game roll back dead into the river.¹

But although Sir Samuel Baker does not take this view of the ivory trade, he takes, as we have seen, a very decided view with regard to the slave trade, and the work before us is an account of his labours in relation to the expedition which was organised by the Khedive in council, for the purpose, as the firman has it, "of suppressing the slave trade and introducing a system of regular commerce," which was to be done by "subduing to the Khedive's authority the countries situated to the south of Gondokoro," which were placed under

¹ Livingstone's "Last Journals," vol. i. p. 419.

his command. His authority, which was somewhat unlimited by the words "the most absolute and supreme power—even that of death—over all those who may compose the expedition," was to commence on the 1st of April 1869, and was to continue for four years. Sir Samuel Baker, who had the care of many of the preliminary preparations, was in every respect most prudent, and carefully provided everything that forethought could suggest; and had his efforts been as ably seconded in Egypt, the delays of which he complains, and half-failures which but for his energy and perseverance would have frustrated the objects in view, would have been avoided. For although the exploits of the expedition could not have been more brilliant, the results might have been made more secure. But these efforts were not seconded, and Sir Samuel Baker had not only to fight with the Baris and the sottish savage Kabba Réga, and the wily slave-hunter Abou Saood, but had to contend with much stress of public opinion and official obstruction; which make the success which crowned his efforts all the more honourable, and his perseverance and courage against such open and secret odds all the more praiseworthy.

Sir Samuel Baker took from England with him not only steamers which he meant to sail on the Albert Nyanza, steel lifeboats, and magazines full of stores and presents for his savage allies, but he was accompanied by his wife, Lady Baker, his nephew, Lieutenant Julian Baker, and an efficient English staff. He travelled to Khartoum, by steamer to Suakin on the Red Sea, and thence across the Nubian desert. Here his difficulties began. The ships which ought to have been ready for the conveyance of his troops—which numbered 1600 men—were not prepared. The camels which ought to have been forwarded from Cairo, and without which the conveyance of the sections of the steamers he had brought from Europe from Gondokoro to the lake

would be attended with the greatest difficulty, had not arrived. Obstructions were to be met with on all hands, and no wonder. All the people in Khartoum were interested in the slave trade, and those who were at the head of affairs in the south of Egypt were avowedly hostile to the objects of the expedition. The nefarious trade upon which the people of Khartoum existed was to be put an end to : it is no wonder that the people looked with disfavour upon the instrument by which this was to be brought about. However, although the passive resistance of delay impeded his purpose, at last, after many hindrances, Sir Samuel Baker began his expedition to Gondokoro on the 8th of February 1870. But the tactics of delay had been so far successful. It was really now too late to attempt the passage of the Bahr Giraffe, and the passage of the White Nile to ships was rendered impossible by the Sudd or Grass-barrier which crossed it, and which must be cleared away if that fine river is to become a highway to Central Africa. But the fact that the time for the passage of the Bahr Giraffe—which has, owing to the vegetable rafts and obstructions, become a series of shifting lakes and pestiferous marshes—had passed had to be learned at the cost of an attempt and failure, and on the 2nd of April, after some hard efforts to make a passage through, the order to turn back was given. But although his purpose had so far failed he was not frustrated. Precious time was slipping away, his authority only lasted for four years, and he must remain inactive with disheartened and unwilling troops on the banks of the Nile until the rise of the river would make the passage of that rotting district possible. These months, however, which had to elapse, were well spent at his camp on the river, to which he gave the name of Tewfikceyah, not only in attempting, not very successfully we fear, to redress the grievances of Quat Kare, the real king of the Shillooks ; in freeing some

slaves which the Upper Nile hunters still attempted to send to market in close packed diahbecahs, but in learning something of the politics of the Soudan, by which he discovered that while the Government was pretending to put down slavery with the one hand, it was encouraging slave-hunters with the other. Not a very satisfactory discovery that for a leader of an expedition, who felt little confidence in the honesty, the spirit, or the sympathy of his men. It might have suggested itself to Sir Samuel Baker's mind that the annexation of territory was perhaps the real object of the Egyptian Government, and that philanthropy and legitimate commerce were only gaudy excuses which were to be given to Europe for acts that are regarded as somewhat unjustifiable in these days, and as temptations which might induce a man of Sir Samuel Baker's integrity and ability to enter the service of Egypt. Perhaps it did occur to him ; but he meant to do the work which, whether it was given him or not, lay to his hand. On the 11th of December the journey to Gondokoro was recommenced, and the camp at Tewfik-eeeah was deserted. Even now the carelessness and stupidity of his subordinates was a cause of delay, and no wonder if "against stupidity the gods fight unvictorious." But after several mishaps the vegetable débris of countless summer growths was again reached, and this time all the difficulties which it opposed to the progress of the fleet were with infinite patience, untiring perseverance, and versatile ingenuity overcome, and at length the fleet again rode in the waters of the Nile, and on the 15th of April 1871 they reached Gondokoro. But it was not only against the stupidity and unwillingness of his subordinates, and the obstructions which were thrown in his way by certain authorities, that Sir Samuel Baker had to contend. His whole book reads like a novel, and although there is not the usual love story running through it, there is

the conventional villain. Abou Saood, a member of the Khartoum firm of Agād & Co., is the villain of the piece. All the hostility of the Baris which the Government troops, as Sir Samuel Baker is never tired of calling them, had to encounter was due to Abou Saood. The return of about 1100 men and women to Khartoum by command of Colonel Raouf Bey, an act contrary to orders and which had the effect of crippling the expedition, was incited by Abou Saood. The absence of Wat-el-Mek from Gondokoro, a man who from his knowledge of the country, his courage, and ability would have been of great service to the Government, was planned by Abou Saood. The ill feeling and treachery of the usurper Kabba Réga, who reigned instead of Kamrasi over the Unyoro, which led to the battle of Masindi, and to the ultimate though brave retreat of the Government troops through eight days of incessant fighting and interminable ambushes upon the country of Rionga, was occasioned by the cunning misrepresentations of Abou Saood. The conduct of the Vakeel Suleiman, which was very diabolical, was, it appears, also instigated by this most cunning merchant. He had reason to dislike Sir Samuel Baker and the object of his expedition. The house of Agād & Co. were ivory and slave merchants. The district in which Abou Saood's zareebas were situated, and in which he profited from the irregular commerce in men and tusks, was the district in which regular commerce was to be established, where slavery was to be abolished, and where settled government, which rules by peace, was to take the place of the anarchic conditions of war, of fraud, and force, which had been the conditions most favourable for the prosperity of that illicit trade in men—illicit, not alas! by the laws of Egypt, which are but a blurred and defaced transcript of higher laws, but illicit by the laws of God. He had every interest to oppose Sir Samuel Baker, every reason to attempt to

make the expedition a failure, and he was at least faithful in his diabolic perseverance to that somewhat urgent allegiance to self which is the characteristic of the villain. Sir Samuel Baker's readers will feel that he was too lenient to this marplot, and that he might with some advantage to his purpose have exercised his "supreme power—even that of death"—in relation to this most energetic member of the firm of Agād & Co. We feel that he is almost too slow to wrath in this matter, and like the boy who, witnessing the long sword fight between a sturdy Macbeth and an equally valiant Macduff, and wearying for the catastrophe, regardless of anachronisms, cried out, "Shoot him"; we felt inclined at more than one juncture to tender the same advice. But we all along hoped to hear that in the end Abou Saood, like his vakeel Ali Hussein, had met his reward. It is so common in romances and in the world too, for men may tolerate evil for a time, but in the end they abolish it. It is therefore somewhat disappointing to learn that, although justice was promised by the Khedive, and although all the proofs of Abou Saood's complicity with rebels, and other punishable acts, were submitted by Sir Samuel Baker to him before he left Egypt, that instead of being punished this man has been rewarded. This is the post-script to "Ismailia." "After my departure from Egypt Abou Saood was released and was appointed assistant to my successor." Does that act upon the part of the Government at Cairo show much real sincerity in relation to the suppression of the slave trade south of Gondokoro? They are half-hearted in Egypt as well as in England. But Sir Samuel Baker was in earnest, and has, notwithstanding the lack of energy and interest with which he was seconded, notwithstanding the inefficiency of the materials with which he had to deal, notwithstanding the treachery and malice of Abou Saood, done a good work in the districts of the Upper

Nile. After much difficulty with the Baris and Belinians near Gondokoro, he brought about peace, but not without war, he secured supplies for his troops, but not without force, for the machinations of Abou Saood had the effect of restraining the natives from the marketing and barter which was to be the small beginning of great trades ; and he started with a small band of soldiers upon the expedition to the countries south of Gondokoro. His march through Loboré to Fatiko was unmolested ; from Fatiko he marched to Unyoro and thence to Masindi. Masindi was the capital of the realm of the greedy Kabba Réga, and here on a certain day, after the slaves had been set free, the Ottoman flag was hoisted and Unyoro annexed to Egypt (14th May 1872). But here too was treachery, and at length an open rupture between the King and the Pacha, which resulted in the burning of Masindi, and after a further act of treachery upon the part of Kabba Réga, in the withdrawal of the Government troops from Unyoro to Rionga. Thence Sir Samuel Baker proceeded to Fatiko, where upon his arrival he found rebellion upon the part of the enraged slave-hunters which burst into revolt. This, however, with the aid of the "Forty Thieves," as his picked bodyguard was called, he succeeded in putting down, and having formed a corps of irregulars, and attached Sulciman and Wat-el-Mek to the Government by opportune clemency, having seen the establishment of peace where he had found the grim visage of war, he returned to Gondokoro and thence to Khartoum. From Khartoum he proceeded to Suakin, and thence to Cairo. So ended the expedition, and there can only be one opinion with reference to Sir Samuel Baker's conduct of the difficult and perilous enterprise. He showed courage and ability, and throughout his acts were not only brave and intrepid, but just and lenient. He has carried an example of generalship, kindness, and humanity into the heart of

a country which wotted little of these things. These examples cannot be lost. Others will follow where he has trodden. Where the grass has been laid foot-steps will broaden into pathways, and pathways into roads. There will be a thoroughfare from Cairo to Zanzibar.

But in one aspect the expedition cannot be regarded as successful. Its success really consisted in the defeat of the slave-hunters. It was doubtless of the utmost importance that they should cease to pursue their nefarious calling. While slave-hunters sought slaves and ivory in the great lake country, the improvement of the people, and the progress of fair and regular commerce which is the harbinger of civilisation, was impossible. But that, after all, was a question of Egyptian police. The ivory and slave merchants were really tenants of the Egyptian Government. They exercised their rights under concessions granted by the State, and if they continued to exercise rights which were adverse to the policy of the State after the concessions had expired, it was for the Egyptian Government to stop these home robbers, in the way which a Government stops the career of a highwayman. But it does not appear that there was any continuance of the trade when the contract had come to an end, although there was an attempt upon the part of Abou Saood to defraud the Government of the tax in kind which had been imposed on the ivory at his zareebas. This effort was, if we remember aright, frustrated by Sir Samuel Baker, but we cannot think that his only object in penetrating Central Africa with 1600 men was to act the part of an Egyptian custom-house officer. But if the action of the slave-hunters could have been controlled by a governmental act at Cairo or Khartoum, wherein lay the success of the expedition? Sir Samuel Baker found enemies in the Baris and Belinians, and he left them allies; but, by his own showing, the enmity was due to the scheming

slave-hunter. He found a seeming ally in Kabba Réga, and he left in Unyoro a somewhat bitter enemy. He interchanged compliments and messages with M'tese, the King of Uganda, but he had not really to be conciliated, as he had all along been friendly. All that was accomplished, so far as we can see, which was in the direction of the main purpose of the expedition, was the construction of the fort at Fatiko, and the leaving of the garrison at Gondokoro. The presence of disciplined white men cannot fail to have a beneficial effect upon the natives. Indirectly Sir Samuel Baker's expedition has been of much service. Owing to his representations to Egypt, the White Nile will be cleared of its raft rubbish and again opened to navigation. Owing to his representations to Europe we cannot but think that the Egyptian Government will be shamed out of the encouragement of the lawless trade, which renders the Upper Nile region a wilderness, while it might be a farm with granaries not only for its own wants but for the wants of Southern Europe. But if Upper Egypt supplied the wants of Europe, Europe would supply innumerable things to Upper Egypt which would create wants, and the creation of wants is the beginning of civilisation. Surely the Egyptian Government will begin to perceive that its only function is to make itself unnecessary. While this rapine and wrong commerce exists a Government is called for, but it is a Government which will put an end to these. If the rulers of Egypt are unwilling to cope with these evils, a Government will surely come which will cope with these evils and with that other evil, the rulers of Egypt too! Let them look to it. The days of freedom to do evil are past. The new freedom only means freedom to do right, which of a truth is the only freedom. We no longer allow disease to be free to decimate the people; we no longer allow ignorance to be a free path to crime, and a time will come

when we will not suffer countries to disgrace humanity. But besides these indirect effects of Sir Samuel Baker's expedition there is another. He raised the Ottoman flag in Masindi, and that is a symbol of rule, of government; but everywhere, throughout his arduous enterprise, he exhibited what is not the symbol but the reality of rule, the perseverance, the ability, the skill, and the humanity of an English gentleman. That is something to show to the natives of Central Africa.

We must now refer to Livingstone's last journals. A very different expedition that which left Zanzibar on the 19th of March 1866 from that which sailed up the White Nile and the Bahr Giraffe from Khartoum on the 8th of February 1870. Yet although the former was insignificant in comparison, we cannot but think that the results will bulk as large in the public eye. What a man can do does not depend upon the assistance of Governments but upon himself; it is not the retinue a man has with him which can effect anything, but what he has in him. Livingstone's retinue was of poor stuff. His dumb retinue of camels and mules are abused by some of his unwilling Sepoys and by the cruel tsetse-fly, and one by one die. Then the Sepoys, finding that such hints, of the necessity of a return to better quarters from the hot jungles and the spare diet of Makonde, are disregarded, finding that their leader had patience to bear with their malingering and with their tardiness, at length become more explicit, and so even before the expedition has reached lake Nyassa they are dismissed. Having gone round by the south end of the lake, and having heard various black rumours of these very terrible fellows the Mazitus, a tribe residing on the high tableland to the north-west of Nyassa, and one of whose terrific features was the shields they used, Livingstone lost the society of the Johanna men, who "walked off leaving the goods on

the ground," on the 26th of September. So too of the Nassick boys and Shupanga canoemen, and at the time of his death on May 1, 1873, there remained only five faithful ones of all that had left Zanzibar in 1866. How faithful these five were, the narrative which the editor of these last journals supplies in continuation of Livingstone's notes, shows. But for these five men the valuable journals which are now before us, the important maps which were the careful results of these years of travel, the careful observations and vigorous researches of the greatest of African explorers would have been lost to the world, and remains which add another glory to the dust of which Westminster Abbey is the precious casket would have been poorly buried in an African grave. That these "Last Journals" are one of the most excellent contributions to the discovery literature of the centre of Africa, cannot, we think, be doubted. No traveller has gone over more of the new ground, unknown to white foot, than David Livingstone, and no traveller carried with him more attentive eyes, or a more excellent capacity both of head and heart, than the strong, persevering, brave, and reverent man who died upon his knees in the hut in Chitambo's village, to the south of Lake Bangweolo, two years ago.

But this is a most difficult book to review. It is not written for the reviewer but for the man himself. It is only made up of jottings which were to save his memory from carrying impossible loads. Day by day we have some shrewd observation, some interesting fact, some manly protest or some scrap of keen speculation. There is no continuous current of thought running through it; it is simply the honest and faithful jotting of a painstaking man who had his senses well trained to observe, and his head well trained to know what was worth observing. There is a continuity of purpose, however, in the life of which these notes and journals give some faithful records. From the beginning

to the end he was conscious of his mission.¹ He was carrying the broad truth to those who had but dim inklings of what seemed to him the main, the irresistible fact of the universe, the existence and the Fatherhood of God. He was carrying the message which God's Son, according to his earnest creed, Himself bore, and he felt proud of his mission. He looked forward to the time when the evils of slavery should cease, when the people who have a love of peace and the quiet arts of agriculture should be left to themselves to work out the end of their existence, and to bring about prosperity and happiness in that wide region which is being desolated in consequence of the false idea that man can have property in man. Over and over again he dwells upon the evils of the present terrible system. Here are some grim fragments.

"19th June 1866.—We passed a woman tied by the neck to a tree and dead. The people of the country explained that she had been unable to keep up with the other slaves in a gang, and her master had determined that she should not become the property of any one else if she recovered after resting for a time. I may mention here that we saw others tied up in a similar manner, and one lying in the path shot or stabbed, for she was in a pool of blood.

"27th June.—One of our men wandered and found a number of slaves with slave-sticks on, abandoned by their master from want of food. They were too weak to be able to speak or say where they came from; some were quite young.

"29th June.—I saw a person bound to a tree and dead—a sad sight, whoever was the perpetrator. . . . A great deal if not all the lawlessness of this quarter (Waiyan and Makao) is the result of the slave trade, for the Arabs buy whoever is brought to them, and in a country covered with forest as this is, kidnapping can

¹ "Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 66.

be prosecuted with the greatest ease ; elsewhere the people are honest and have a regard for justice.

"*16th September.*—At the present rate of destruction of population, the whole country will soon be a desert."

And after many other such allusions he writes :—

"*4th June 1868.*—From what I see of slaving even in its best phases I would not be a slave-dealer for the world."

Such experiences are enough to give earnestness to one's hatred of an institution which can produce such results. Livingstone had a real belief in the possibility of a great future for Africa,¹ but he knew that that would be impossible while the trade, which it was his object to suppress, continued. He found that many of the populations of the countries he travelled through were possessed of the idea of property in man,² and he was of opinion that it was this erroneous idea—which is erroneous not only when looked at from the Christian point of view, which looks upon the social relationship as a brotherhood, but regarded as a question of the philosophy of jurisprudence—that retarded all improvement, that prevented the development of character amongst those in whose minds were the elements of justice, the sentiment of honesty, and the germs of religion, and that turned a rich and fertile land into a wilderness and a hunting-ground. We cannot but believe that Livingstone was right in this opinion, and right when he thought that slavery, "the great open sore of the world," would be mitigated by religion ; and that the religion of love might bring about the peace which was so urgently required to enable Africa to develop her resources—that the religion of equality and brotherly love would bring about the freedom which was the right of each,

¹ See vol. ii. p. 81.

² Vol. i. pp. 143, 154.

and the extinction of the idea of property in humanity.¹ Without these the future of Africa would be like the past. But Livingstone was not a visionary, but a very thorough-headed practical man. He hoped much from God's blessing on his work, but he hoped more from his labours as an explorer and geographer. For Africa, in the meantime, a map was more important than a Bible. It almost seems incredible to believe that it remained for men of the nineteenth century to discover that great group of inland seas which lies in the centre of Africa. Every portion of the coast is so well known. It is only a holiday journey round the Cape of Good Hope now. The northern shore has histories which are older now, and were perhaps more splendid once, than those of Europe, and yet of the interior of Africa until this century little or nothing was known. An America was lying in the midst of men for centuries, and no Columbus was there to seek for it. But there is no barrier more secure than that of ignorance. That no one knew anything of it was the reason that no one endeavoured to know anything. If once a man shows the way the crowd will follow him; but it requires a strong, able man to go where others have feared to go, indeed in everything that fearless spirit which will tread anywhere with God, however much the path may separate it from humanity, is the distinction between the great and the small man. The genius thinks thoughts that no one has dared to think, the orator says things that no one has dared to say, the inventor does things that no one has dared to do, and the explorer goes where no one has dared to go. A block is pierced by the small end of the wedge—the explorer is the point of the

¹ "I, too, have shed light of another kind, and am fain to believe that I have performed a small part in the grand revolution which our Maker has been for ages carrying on by multitudes of conscious and many unconscious agents all over the world" ("Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 66).

human wedge which makes its way into the country. The obstacle to the knowledge of Africa has been the ignorance of Africa. The physical features of that vast continent were unknown, and but for some such leaders of men as Livingstone they would have remained unknown. Now, however, a way is opened to other men by the mere footprints of that solitary Englishman through the dense vegetation, the "steamy smothering air" of that continent, and already men are following in his footsteps.¹ His geographical discoveries have in that aspect been all important. There is a fine figure of speech used in connection with religious tenets where a man is called "a way for us." Surely in a true sense David Livingstone is a way for us into the centre of Africa.² How considerable his discoveries have been will be evident from a glance at a map of Africa as it was before his enterprise began and a map of Africa since his enterprise so sadly ended. He has given us continents and seas of which we knew nothing. He has told us of mountain ranges, of high tablelands, of broad rivers of which we were ignorant. In these last wanderings he discovered Lake Bangweolo or Bemba, which is at least 150 miles long by 80 broad.³ The Nanyuema country, for which he set out on the 12th July 1869, was hitherto unknown. He was the first European to visit Lake Moero. He has made us familiar with every headland and cove in that long narrow lake, Tanganyika, and with the height of innumerable mountains and districts, the breadth of innumerable rivers, and the peculiarities of innumerable tribes. The red lines which show his journeyings in the maps which accompany this careful edition of his "Last Journals," show how much ground he

¹ "All Central Africa will soon be known," he says, in a note of the 28th January 1871. "Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 97.

² We see that Dr. Steer, the Bishop of Central Africa, has just left this country for his diocese.

³ Vol. i. p. 319.

has gone over. The careful naming of the places on the map would have been a most valuable geographical contribution, but the thoroughness of his investigations went much further. No man, we feel convinced, could have contributed more to the knowledge of Central Africa than David Livingstone. A man with powers of scientific observation, a man with admirable ability in geographical dialectics, he yet very seldom indulges in theories, but is content to do the important drudgery of registering the rainfall day by day, of recording the temperature and making barometrical and hypsometrical observations with "unflagging thoroughness of purpose year in and year out."¹ There could have been no abler or better pioneer of men into the unknown districts of Central Africa than him whose weary journeyings, whose unfailing patience, whose firm perseverance, whose failing health and long illnesses are faithfully recorded in these volumes. As to the book itself, we said it was not one which was written for reviewers, yet it has merits which a reviewer may well note. There is a clear directness of style which is peculiarly pleasant after the many specimens of modern English which seem to sprawl over the thought they are meant to convey. The editing is well performed by the Rev. Mr. Waller, whose past knowledge not only of Livingstone but of Africa contributed to make him a competent and tender editor and to some extent a biographer. One want we note with disappointment, and that is the absence of an index. In a work of the nature of that before us, an index was almost indispensably necessary. It would have been the means of introducing a possible method into a series of observations, discoveries, and researches which were necessarily miscellaneous as they left the hand of Livingstone, seeing that they had no other connection than that of the time at which

¹ Introduction, p. x.

they were made or recorded. Mr. Waller has done his work so well we regret that he has not, in this respect, done it better. It is weary routine work to the author or editor making an index, but how much weary and annoying trouble and time does it save the reader.

And how does this work bear upon the matter we have here on hand? Does it only vamp up stories of the murder of poor over-driven and failing slaves, or tell new tales which read like old, these tragedies are so common now. Will it effect much by bringing to light more of the shocking particulars of the abhorred trade? We fear that its influence will be limited in that way. We have said that England is half-hearted, and will not in the meanwhile be stung by such remote sympathy to do more than send some cruisers to steam about the east coast of Africa, and enter into waste-paper treaties with the powerless Sultan of Zanzibar. But the good work of this man cannot pass away with his troubled life. He has left Europe a legacy of Central Africa. He has by these maps and journals, which were made in those laborious journeys, possessed us of a knowledge of the country which has opened it to us. Now that he has made the way, many will follow in his footsteps. He has made what was a fastness a highroad. Already we have had reporters in Central Africa in search of the explorer, we will have many in time to come in search of the explored. It is finding the key to the door that is the difficulty; once the bolt is shot it will turn upon its hinges. That these results will be the means of putting an end, after many days, we fear, to the slave trade, which is an "issue of blood" to Africa at the present time, and drains itself away, we hope and believe. The influence of man upon man is slow but certain. These "Last Journals" contain innumerable proofs of the influence which Livingstone exercised upon those about him, for we see men become

better by the infection of his presence. It was no wonder that in early times it was believed that great and good men could by their physical touch work miracles, for each man must have had experience of great effects produced by that mental touch which we call influence, effects which to them must have seemed more miraculous than the cure of disease or the raising from the dead. But that law, although occult, is palpable enough to those who have eyes. It is one of the strongest in the universe, and we cannot but believe that now that there has been a little leaven introduced into the dough of Africa, anon the whole lump will be leavened. We cannot but believe that these wanderings will have an immense influence upon the future of Africa. We have there a country well watered by large navigable rivers, which flow in many instances from central lakes, which would afford easy means of water communication from the centres of commerce, and of industry which might under peace grow upon their banks. The climate is, according to all the evidence, more healthy than that of India, and the population are on the whole docile, tractable, and peace-loving.¹ The land is in many places admirably adapted for a cultivation which would make the scraping and penurious efforts of European soil look sterile by comparison, and in many places there is an abundance of easily worked iron and coal. These physical advantages are immense. America, with only some of these, and labouring under the disadvantage of distance from Europe, has produced some of the first of nations in a couple of centuries. What might not Africa become? We know what Egypt was, but we cannot say what Africa might become. Little or nothing stands in the way of this progress except African slavery, which we as a country are slow to put an end to, but which may, it seems,

¹ "Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 73.

through the brave and life-sacrificing exertions of some of our countrymen, in time be made to cease. When that time comes we will have to look upon Livingstone not only as a traveller, an explorer, and a geographer, but as a philanthropist.¹

¹ "Mine," says Livingstone, "has been a calm, hopeful endeavour to do the work that has been given me to do, whether I succeed or whether I fail. The prospect of death in pursuing what I knew to be right did not make me veer to one side or the other." ("Last Journals," vol. ii. p. 72.)

IV

RUSSIA ¹

NO country presents more interesting and important questions for study, and, if possible, for answer, than Russia. Not only are there imminent political questions which affect the nations of Europe and Asia, and which affect our own national interests in a peculiar way, connected with that great empire, but there are innumerable social and economical problems which may be well considered in the light of an intimate knowledge of the development and condition of the mixed race which spreads its vast proportions over all the Russias. But notwithstanding the importance of a careful study and intimate knowledge of that formidable power and its unwieldy resources,—notwithstanding the not altogether unjustifiable fear with which the designs of Russia are regarded, and the terrible consequences of a misinterpretation of the signs of these perilous times, the information which is possessed by most people with reference to Russia and her policy is by no means either accurate or ample. True, quite recently a considerable effort has been made to supply this want of information, and men well qualified for the task have contributed to dissipate the ignorance which, considering the magni-

¹ "Russia." By D. Mackenzie Wallace, M.A., Member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. London: Cassell, Petter, & Galpin. 1877. "Savage and Civilised Russia." By W. R. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1877. "Russian Wars with Turkey." By Major Frank S. Russell, 14th Hussars. London: Henry S. King & Co. 1877.

tude of the interests involved and the greatness of the country in question, is scarcely less remarkable than deplorable. But even now the knowledge we possess concerning Russia is not altogether adequate or satisfactory. It resembles rather the information which is secured by "cram" with a view to examination, than the knowledge which is acquired by careful experience and confirmed by long familiarity, and which is available for the conduct of life. There is a haste about our acquisition which is inimical to clearness of conception and method of arrangement, and many of the views which are expressed, and the conclusions which are entertained, with reference to Russia and her somewhat tortuous policy, are characterised by features which show that they have been adopted for the emergency.

Some of the works from which we draw our information seem to have been forced into print a little prematurely; and even Mr. Wallace's work, in order that it might take the tide of present affairs at the proper point, and be floated to the fortune of a fifth or sixth edition, has been offered to the public without the grave disquisitions upon the rural commune, systems of agriculture, history of the emancipation, the economic condition of the peasantry, the financial system, public instruction, and the like, which he meant to make a part of his work; and we cannot find any reference to the military organisation of Russia in his pages.¹

Still, notwithstanding the nature of the materials which have been supplied to us, we think that sufficient has been said and written to enable us to form

¹ The best information as to army organisation and administration which can be given—for it is difficult to get any accurate information about it, so strict are the Russian press regulations and so corrupt and negligent are many of the officials—will be found in some articles recently published in the *Times*, and reprinted, pp. 207, 224, in Major Russell's work on "Russian Wars with Turkey."

some correct conclusions as to Russia, and we propose to offer these for the consideration of the reader. Our duty here is limited to summing up the evidence which has been given; but the duty of the witnesses, who have come to the bar of public opinion, and testified to facts and hazarded inferences, is a much graver and more difficult one to perform. That we may rightly weigh that evidence and these inferences, it is necessary that we should appreciate the gravity of that duty and the many circumstances which contribute to the difficulty of its performance.

The problems that we are dealing with in relation to Russia are not matters of archaic report, but of living current history; and of all history, current history is the most difficult to write. To make the past, present; to bring the distant near; to approximate the sympathies of living men with races which have been dead for centuries, is, no doubt, a difficult matter; and he who can faithfully accomplish this—who can show us a nation's real life in its true colours, unstained or strained by blots and contortions which are incident to the medium of the character of the most honest historians, does a truly great work. But such a writer has one thing greatly in his favour. In speaking to us, he speaks to our reason and our calm sympathies; we are not "hand and glove" with those old heroes,—we have no common blame or merit with those long-dead villains or saints, and we can look at them and their actions with clear eyes and unbiassed understandings. But the writer of contemporary history has to make that which is near to us, that which is dear to us or hated by us, sufficiently remote from our urgent sentiments to allow us to survey it with fairness and justice. That is not easy. True, the historian of to-day may have a more intimate knowledge of his times than the writer of the history of a bygone age can have of the subject of his study.

But his intimate knowledge is intermixed with prejudices; and even if he can transcend these in himself, he has to speak to men with intense loves and hates, intense beliefs and convictions, which are often irrational and wrong,—men who are in some part the subject of his vivisections—men who have, or believe they have, like opportunities of knowledge with himself, and who have strong sympathies and interests which may gainsay the best reason. But, besides that difficulty, which every writer of the history of his own time must be prepared to encounter, he has other problems presented to him which he will scarcely find easy of solution. In all writing, the duty of the author is to say that which is primarily significant, and to leave unsaid that which is only significant in a secondary sense or insignificant. In the choice of these significant circumstances the merit of real authorship lies. To discern in relation to any matter what is essential and what is unessential is by no means easy. But the writer must learn to do this, for however prolix he may be, he can only give hints after all. A man without genius or without special knowledge will not unfrequently dwell upon unessential elements in his description, and neglect the real important features by which the thing described can be recognised. Inferior writers load their labouring pages with unnecessary details, and at the end of their cumbrous verbosity the reader attains no clear conceptions from their diffuse efforts; while an artist will with a few strong light words represent the whole gist of the affair, however complicated, with a vividness and reality which conjures the actual place or time before the eyes. But there is a preliminary power which is necessary to this excellent literature, and that is the power of selecting that which is, and the rejection of that which is not, significant. Now, however well-gifted an author may be in this respect, he may

undertake to write about events and circumstances in connection with which the exercise of this discretion is almost impossible. In dealing with completed transactions and past events, the appreciation of the significant is not difficult. There is a sifting process in the centuries, and the insignificant is lost sight of, while the huge essential features can be surveyed correctly in their relative proportions. It is possible that a critic in Homer's days might be in doubt as to the relative merits of the "Iliad" and some feeble efforts of a rural poetaster; but now Homer comes alone from his age. But in dealing with the vital conditions and developing circumstances of our own time, we are not assisted by this natural selection of oblivion and tradition, and it is well-nigh impossible to determine the nature of acts and events which are only in the doing or happening, and which are properly to be estimated only by their results. We may judge with some accuracy of the height of hills if we see them as a range on the horizon, but who can tell the relative soaring proportions of their bulky forms if he is sunk in the shade of one of their deep valleys? What chemist would predicate the result of an experiment from the first or second observation of a long process of intermediate results? And yet it is a not less difficult duty which the writer of contemporary history undertakes; and the results of his labours, however ingenious, however conscientious, must be taken in connection with a memory of the inevitable drawbacks to a perfect performance or an adequate accomplishment of the high design.

It seemed to us necessary to make these remarks, in order that the true value of Mr. Wallace's book might be appreciated. He himself is conscious that his estimate of the effects of recent changes—as, for instance, the emancipation of the serfs—may be premature. Indeed, his "Russia" belongs to that class of works

which we have been describing, but, at the same time, it possesses many merits of which works of that class are usually devoid. He did not, like some writers whose careless works have passed before the careless eyes of circulating-library readers in these last few years, pay a short summer holiday visit to Russia, see some things, and pretend to have seen a great deal more, and write a flashy book full of mistakes and epigrams. Mr. Wallace's book is peculiarly calm and judicious. He speaks always with care, often from much painstaking study, and invariably from excellent opportunities of the best information. He has been wise in preparing himself to write a great work by a long residence in the country, and by familiarising himself with its institutions. But he was well prepared to profit by his exceptional opportunities before he went to Russia. He is evidently a man of culture in the best sense—a man with wide experience, not only of books but of men; and he has, besides his experience, good observant eyes and a clear thoughtful head. With these advantages it was to be expected that he would produce an admirable book about Russia, and that expectation has been fully realised. His book is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of Russia, and we can praise his clear and candid performance without stint. It is the best book we have read about that great country. Many aspects of Russian life, many important problems of Russian sociology, many questions of international policy and of social polity, are dealt with in these volumes by a most careful and capable observer and by an impartial and judicious writer. Mr. Wallace is master of a lucid style of English prose, and we cannot wonder that his book has already passed through two editions. But even taking this view of the merits of Mr. Wallace's performance, we would guard ourselves against a too implicit acceptance of his book as an authentic history of Russia at the present time, by the

considerations as to the value of contemporary history which we have already submitted to the reader, and by the remembrance of the fact that "even a judge is an advocate after all." Even Mr. Wallace admits, as we have said, that it may be too early to speak accurately and with authority as to the results of the emancipation of the serfs (vol. ii. pp. 311, 345), and he expresses his views as to the rural communes and their future with ample diffidence; and so fair does he always try to be, that we feel certain he would admit that he has some prejudices in favour of Russia—which was his home for six years—and that he may possibly have failed, with all his efforts, to eliminate these from his pages or to transcend them in his judgments. We shall have occasion to point out how, in one respect, his views of Russia are scarcely warranted by the evidence which was before him; but here we will content ourselves with these preliminary remarks.

That Russia, altogether apart from any view which we may take of her present policy, is a peculiarly interesting country, is undoubted. Its history is in many respects curious and full of romance; and even the events which have occurred in Russia within the last few years are of the utmost importance to the student of national institutions and social science. It is a country which belongs geographically and ethnologically as much to Asia as to Europe; and while its conquests stretch its autocratic rule more and more over the former continent, its curious eclectic tendencies seem to assimilate it more and more to Western nations. Russia, which has many of the characteristics of an Oriental power, has always had the ambition to rival the civilisation, the commerce, the literature, and even, to some extent, the institutions, of the countries of Western Europe. One peculiarity of Russia as a country may be noted here, and that is its want of originaive power. It has developed or invented nothing,—it has borrowed

or imitated everything. In this Russia resembles the Asiatic world in its recent phases. That world seems to have passed its vigorous youth, in which it originated and invented. China has been standing still for a thousand years. At one time it surpassed all nations in its advancement. It was there that printing was invented ; it was there that gunpowder was first made ; it was there that the suspension-bridge was first constructed. But before it had learned how to use its great discoveries, a blight seems to have fallen upon the race, and it has stood still ever since. It has used the printing for the decoration of tea-chests, the gunpowder for fireworks ; but even now the Chinese show marvellous powers of literal imitation, and their excellent qualities in this respect are making them useful labourers in America, where they undersell the workers with whiter skins. The Russians have some resemblance to the Chinese in this respect, but they have not the satisfaction of feeling, as the Chinese have, that they once were a people possessing genius, that they once were pioneers of science. They are singularly deficient in all these respects. They have always gone to school to the West. They have always had a sort of reputation for acquiring languages, and they show a capacity for appropriating ideas—that is all. Peter the Great left Russia to learn what Russia ought to be. He modelled his army on Western principles ; and Alexander II. has modelled his courts upon those of England or France. But it is the same throughout. Their best writers are imitators of the more gifted authors of Western Europe. This is what they say of themselves :—" Imitators, skilful imitators, we have produced in abundance ; but where is there a man of original genius ? What is our famous poet Zhukófski ? A translator ! What is Pushkin ? A chosen pupil of the Romantic school ! What is Sérnoutof ? A feeble imitator of Byron ! What is Gógol ? " (Wallace, vol. i. p. 394, and see " Savage and

Civilised Russia," p. 151). Well, Gógol, according to Mr. Wallace,¹ is an imitator of Dickens (ii. p. 140). Indeed, the Russians are great only as followers.

But there are other characteristics of Russia which must not be lost sight of. It has not produced discoverers any more than inventors. The map of the world owes little to Russia, while it owes much to such small countries as Portugal and Holland; while the contributions of England, and Austria, and America have also been large. Yet, while it has not discovered new lands, its ambition to acquire new lands has been boundless. If it has not emigrated in ships, it has emigrated in armies. Its ambitions have led it in all directions. Take one illustration. Since 1709 it has made war eight times upon Turkey. On each occasion it was the aggressor, and the result of most of these wars was an addition to its territory ("Russian Wars with Turkey," p. 6). Here are some words which were written in 1854, but which are worthy of being read in 1877:—

"A reference to the map will show that Russia has advanced her frontier in every direction; and even the Caspian Sea, which appeared to present an impediment to her progress, she has turned to advantage by appropriating it to herself. It will be seen that the plains of Tartary have excited her cupidity, while the civilised states of Europe and Asia have been dismembered to augment her dominions. It will be seen that the acquisitions she has made from Sweden are greater than what remains of that ancient kingdom; that her acquisitions from Poland are as large as the whole Austrian Empire; that the territory she has wrested from Turkey

¹ Geigoróvitch, the writer of tales descriptive of rural life in Russia, has also written under the influence of Dickens, and, like most imitators, has been more successful in producing the tricks and affectations of the original than in reproducing the genuine characteristics of the author (Wallace, i. p. 109).

in Europe is equal to the dominions of Prussia exclusive of the Rhenish provinces; and that her acquisitions from Turkey in Asia are equal in extent to all the smaller states of Germany, the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, Belgium, and Holland taken together; that the country she has conquered from Persia is about the size of England; that her acquisitions in Tartary have an area equal to Turkey in Europe, Greece, Italy, and Spain, and that the territory she has acquired within the last sixty-four years (since 1772) is greater in extent and importance than the whole empire she had in Europe before that time. . . . In sixty-four years she has advanced her frontier eight hundred and fifty miles towards Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and Paris; she has approached four hundred and fifty miles nearer to Constantinople; she has possessed herself of the capital of Poland, and has advanced to within four miles of the capital of Sweden, from which, when Peter the First mounted the throne, her frontier was distant three hundred miles."—*Quoted in "Russian Wars with Turkey,"* pp. 7, 8.

But here the quotation becomes inapplicable to the present circumstances, for it goes on to speak of the distance Russia had advanced towards Persia and India, and the further advances in that direction since these sentences were written, which are fully in the memory of all, make the assertions all the stronger than they were in 1854. But passing in the meantime from this aspect of Russian eclecticism, we may point out that Russia possesses a purely autocratic government, which stoops to a police-spy system (Wallace, i. p. 317), and that yet within the last few years serfage has been swept away by the Emperor, and the rural commune, an undoubted democratic institution, has been recognised by law. While Russian society is curiously imitative of that of Western nations, and has been

content to take its fashions, its manners, and even its language, from Paris and Versailles for more than a century, it has not secured from the autocratic power the concession of a constitution or any share of the power which is so despotically wielded by the Emperor. But although Russia has not imitated Western Europe in that respect, she has in many others. We pointed out that the courts—which are arranged in two systems one the Justice of Peace courts, and the other the regular tribunals, the decisions of the appeal court belonging to either of these departments being liable to revision by the Senate or supreme court of revision—had been modelled upon the courts of France and England; but beyond that, trial by jury has been introduced, and a certain amount of local self-government, besides that which exists in the rural commune, has been given to the provincial assemblies (*Zemstvo*). But, unlike such concessions in Western countries, these have been unaccompanied by any limitations of the autocratic power. There is a striking difference between the West and the East in that respect. Here the force comes from below. There is an immense amount of human energy always being generated by the people, and to utilise that—as we do the heat that passes from the engine-fire—we require certain machinery which will give it vent in the direction of useful labour instead of harmful explosion. Here reforms come from the people and are forced upon the Government; there the Czar is the motive power of all changes. The people are inert and recipient, not suggestive of reforms; vital modifications are forced upon the people by the supreme power. Russia seems to be moved by a spring. The great reform of 1861, the emancipation of the serfs, was not called for by the people; the merchant class was entirely apathetic, and the nobles were for the most part averse to the momentous change. Yet against all this national friction the

Emperor carried his point and imposed freedom upon the peasantry.

But not only is Russia interesting in relation to points of contrast with Western civilisation: there are also curious and important contrasts to be found within her own wide domains. Her peasantry are apparently in the theological stage of development; their faith is curiously implicit; they worship God and their icons, and pray to the former to mix Himself in many affairs of daily life, and not to believe a neighbour if he should speak ill of them. They have much faith in certain forms of words, but their religion has not taught them temperance or sobriety. The nobles, on the other hand, seem to be in the metaphysical stage of development. All political and social questions are dealt with upon fundamental and philosophical principles. When a practical question is proposed, they are dissatisfied with an answer drawn from experience and expediency, but "look before and after." "As soon as they begin to examine any simple matter with a view to legislation, it at once becomes a 'question,' and flies up into the region of political and social science" (Wallace, i. p. 215). Their views of the "mir" or village community are characteristic in this respect. To them it is not merely a convenient and temporary form of very local self-government, but it is a "panacea for nearly all social evils" (Wallace, ii. p. 373). It will for ever prevent the formation of a Proletariat; it is the social element which will defy all the disintegrating tendencies which are at work in Western Europe, tendencies which will sooner or later lead to the dismemberment of countries like England, France, and Germany. Mr. Wallace points out that many persons in Russia believe that the nations of the West are on the highroad to political and social anarchy. The populations in these countries have increased, the small landowners have been expropriated by the large landowners, and

the result has been the production of "the masses"—masses of unattached human beings, who have no property in the country, no interest in existing institutions. These men wrench small livelihoods out of hard-handed circumstances, either by the slavery of agricultural labour in the country, or by the worse slavery of artisan labour in the towns. Hitherto, it is argued, owing to free trade and the natural advantages of England in the competition of the world, she has been able to feed her hungry Proletariat; but whenever the industrial and commercial supremacy of England is at an end—and that time is not now distant—it will be impossible for her to feed those hungry masses. Already she has to be supplied with food from other lands for her overgrown population; but she must pay for the grain she wants by her manufactures. When nobody wants her manufactures, having as good of their own, how will she buy off revolution? Now the Russians think that the commune will for ever prevent the occurrence of such stringent wants in their country, that in the commune they have a perfect system of preventive medicine for all social and political evils, and that the fate which is fast hastening to destroy the nations of the West will be averted from Russia by this ancient democratic institution. But there is, at least, a probability that this institution will itself disappear, and a certainty that the redistribution of land, which is one of its characteristic features, will be abandoned. Village communities have existed in other countries—indeed, in every other country; and it is only because Russia lags behind the rest of civilised countries that they are an existent institution there. In this, as in other things, Russia will follow the example of the West; and if the fate of the Western nations is what the Russians think it is, it will be the fate of all the Russias too, and the thin partition of the rural commune which protects them from it will not long stand in the way. But we

referred to this matter to indicate the peculiar intellectual movements of Russian thought, to show their unpractical reference to past principles and ultimate facts, when all that is necessary is a quick decision from immediate premises. Such tendencies are indicative of youth, and in many respects Russia is a young country.

But there are various other contrasts which will strike an inquirer. Here two widely diverse creeds, that of the Mongol and that of the Orthodox, grow together without polemical disagreements. In the West men hold beliefs strongly—they do not live “by bread alone”; and will fight as much for the integrity of their intellectual conceptions as for the security of their material possessions. Differences of creed, in the apathy both of the Russian peasant and the Mongol Tartar, are regarded as natural divisions of men as those of race are, and conversion from a religious belief is no more thought of than the conversion of a Tartar into a Russian.

Again, we not only find strange differences in this hybrid country—a hybrid between Europe and Asia—but we necessarily find strange differences in development. We find all forms of life. It is said of England that it is a nation of shopkeepers, but no such general description is applicable to Russia. We have the Bashkirs and Kirghis of the steppe, who are still pastoral peoples; we find the peasantry of the black earth zone and the forest zone, who have been forced by their circumstances to become agriculturists. But a still further development is going on. In many of the towns the industrial classes are increasing, and it is also certain, from the excellent specimens which were sent to the Philadelphia Exhibition last year, that the manufactures are improving in a very marked degree. These contrasts are not without interest, for they throw light upon the national life of Russia. But the element in Russia which subordinates all these

various tendencies to diversity into a national unity is the autocratic power. The country has no unity by reason of the molecular forces which interact amongst its human units, except in relation to its communal institutions, but by reason of the supreme power. Were that broken, Russia would disintegrate. Even as it is, it is true that were the repulsive force of the various elements which constitute the nation greater than it is, the aggregating and binding force of the central government might easily be overcome; but apathy is a national characteristic, not only of the Russians, but of the Fins, the Tartars, and the other races which live under that stringent rule, and it is of more inflammable materials than these lazy, slow, phlegmatic temperaments that revolutions are made. "The affair of December" 1825 shows the small amount of revolutionary spirit which exists in Russia. It was an attempt to overthrow the imperial power, not by the people, but by the cliques. It was not put down. It was snubbed, and led only to a system of repressive police administration. There is another circumstance which contributes to the passivity of the Russian peasantry, and that is the roominess of Russia. In some parts of the country, as we have seen, the population is so small that the people can live lazily as shepherds. In other parts, it is true that although the population is not dense (in the north little more than one to the English square mile), the lands are so poor, and the chances of starvation so numerous, that the people have been driven to become agriculturists. But, as Mr. Wallace says, until lately "Russia remained an almost exclusively agricultural empire, with abundance of unoccupied land" (i. 442). Even since the aspect of Russia has been changing in this respect, there has been no intense struggle for existence, no competition to rouse the best energies of the people, and to stir their blood in the fight for life, and the resistance of

oppression which makes life unbearable. That industrial life in Russia is very different from the industrial life with which we are familiar, is proved by the fact that it is no uncommon thing in Russia to find mills open only three days in the week, or to find them suspending operations altogether in summer to enable the work-people to attend to their hay harvest. From what has been stated it will be seen that the struggle for existence is not nearly so fierce in Russia as it is in Western Europe, and that, on the whole, the means of existence are somewhat easily secured. That fact to some extent accounts for the apathy and political passivity of the peasantry, and for the unshaken grasp of the supreme power. Were the populations as dense as they are in this country, were the products of the land as small in relation to the number of the people as they are in England, were the people more aggregated in towns than they are at present, the autocratic power would have a more turbulent nation to deal with, and some real constitutional limitation of the power of the Czar might be an absolute necessity. That the territorial aggrandisement of Russia, of which we shall have more to say hereafter, that the expansion of territory and the annexation of wide lands, which have given even a greater amount of room to the Russian people, and eased the inter-relations of consumption and production, have tended to postpone the time when the question of autocratic or democratic government will have to be raised and decided, seems to us certain. But a time will come when Russia will have to be content with boundaries, when her territorial aggrandisement will be checked by the conflicting interests of other and more powerful races; and when that time comes, the question as to the ultimate form of government will become imminent. Russia is preparing the way for the more speedy broaching of the great subject with one hand, while she is endeavouring to postpone

it with the other. Hitherto Russia has been a country in chains. It has been shut out from the world by winter on the north, and by somewhat troublesome neighbours on the south and west. She has been ambitious of having ports and commerce, and Constantinople has been coveted by the Czars as "the key of their house." Much intricate diplomacy has been expended with a view to obtaining access to the ports and markets of the West. Even now it cannot be doubted that Russia is ambitious of a prominent place in the markets of the world, and much of her insidious policy has been and is directed to the securing the means to that end; amongst which a southern port and an unimpeded waterway to all the countries of the world is by no means the least important. But this anxiety to enter into the marts will, if it is gratified, expedite the practical solution of the question of ultimate government. The immediate result of successful commercial relations with other countries would be to increase the wealth and consequently to increase the population of Russia. It would also produce greater aggregations of men, and the town populations would become relatively more powerful than the country.¹ When that time comes, the Czar question will be raised. Russia's extensions to the East give the Emperor's throne a wider and firmer basis; her extensions, either territorial or commercial, to the West render the foundations of the autocratic power less and less stable. Still this is a long view into the future, and it seems certain that the question will not be a practical one for centuries.

That the rural communes will prevent the question ever becoming a practical one—as we see Russians believe—we cannot think. The village community is a

¹ In Russia the urban element comprises only a tenth part of the entire population, whereas in Great Britain more than one-half of the inhabitants are dwellers in towns (Wallace, i. 255).

most interesting institution. Any one acquainted with Sir Henry S. Maine's work upon the subject, or with Mr. Laveleye's contribution to the same inquiry, knows how important a part these communal institutions have played in the early history of all peoples. We find that village communities living together and owning land in common have not been confined to any one country, but have existed at a certain stage of development in all. Indeed, while land is abundant in relation to the population, and while primitive agriculture is sufficient to supply all the wants of the people, common holding of land is likely to be the only form of ownership. But when the land becomes scarce relatively to the population—when primitive modes of agriculture no longer suffice,—when the land which has been exhausted by production cannot be abandoned and other unexhausted land appropriated at will, but the exhaustion of production has to be supplied by the expensive process of manuring or high farming, and when the necessities of the time necessitate the division of labour, so that every man cannot be a farmer—then communal agriculture passes away, fixity of tenure in the same hands becomes a necessity, and the right of private property in land emerges from the primitive condition of village ownership. That stage of development has not as yet been reached in Russia. There the village community is still a living, an existing institution, and some description of it may not be altogether out of place here. It is not merely a question of archaic law; it is important, because unless one understands its peculiar constitution, he will fail to understand the real social life of the peasantry.

The peasant family in Russia is, or rather was—for the emancipation of the serfs has to some extent modified the family relations—a peculiar association, in which the members had nearly all things in common. Yet the household was subject to a ruler—its head—who

was called Khozäin, and he represented the family in its larger and more responsible relations with the outer world. The village is somewhat like the family on a larger scale, and this resemblance may be indicative of the origin of these communities. Here, as in the family, there is a common ownership of certain things—the family owns the house, its contents, and the implements of agriculture. The village community owns the arable land and pasturage. Here, too, as in the family, there is common responsibility for certain acts, and a common bearing of certain burdens. The household is responsible for the debts, while it is the village which is responsible to the imperial exchequer for the taxes. In the village, as in the house, there is a head, or ruler, but instead of being the head of the household, he is the village elder or Starosta; and in each case the head is to a great extent amenable to the authority of those over whom he in a sense rules, and for whom he performs executive functions. There is a further similarity; for the family, in case of insolvency, cannot be deprived of its house, or of the implements used in agriculture, while the commune cannot under any circumstances be deprived of the land. Still, notwithstanding these points of similarity, there are distinguishing features between the family and the village community. The members of the former farm in common, and are supposed to put their earnings into a common purse; the members of the latter farm separately the land allotted to them, and only contribute a quota to the common treasury, from which sums to meet the common liabilities are disbursed. It cannot be doubted that this intimate association of men and families in common rights and common burdens is fraught with common consequences which are quite unknown in the home relations which exist in this country. Here each man may do very much as he likes; there a man's autonomy is limited by the rights

which the village has to his labours and his contribution to the common funds. No man can be idle in the household without throwing a greater burden of labour on the other members of the family ; no man can be dissolute or thriftless in the community without imposing heavier burdens upon his yoke-fellows in the same village team. Owing to these circumstances, common rights have become associated with membership of the commune. Thus no peasant can leave the village without permission, and even when he has obtained such a passport to wander, he may be recalled to his village by the voice of the commune at any time ; and during his absence he has to contribute his full share to the taxes which have to be borne by the community.

To understand the village community, one must understand its relation to the state. The names of male peasants in every part of the empire are entered in census lists, and that altogether irrespective of the age at the time the census is taken. Thus a new-born babe and a man of eighty are both entered in this list. These lists are "revised" from time to time, but meanwhile the last list is held to be correct, although many children may have been born, or many men may have died. Each commune has a list of its male members, or "revision souls," as they are called, and until the next census is taken pay taxes in proportion to the number on that list. And every peasant who pays taxes is entitled to a share in the arable land and pasturage belonging to the commune. But the taxes paid are in no sense in the nature of rent. The taxes are exacted from the commune, and the commune divides the land belonging to it as it thinks fit. There is, of course, great variety in the practice as to the division of the common land. Sometimes it is divided according to the number of males in a household, or "revision souls" in the census list. This system sometimes leads to hardship ; for the share in the common

land is not always to be regarded as a privilege, but is not unfrequently a burden, and therefore some communes have allotted the land, not in proportion to the number of "revision souls" on the list, but according to the working power of the families. Each commune possesses its code of unwritten laws—laws which have passed from customs dictated by practical necessity into the stricter form of traditional rules, which are never written down, but are perfectly understood and constantly acted upon. The village elder, while in one sense the ruler, is really only the executive, and the real power rests with the village assembly, of which every head of a household is a member. These village parliaments consider all the questions which are of importance to the communal existence. They divide the lands, fix the time for making the hay, elect the elder, make rules for the moral government of the community—as, for instance, whether a gin-shop (*kabāḱ*) shall be opened within the village precincts—and what measures shall be taken to compel the payment of the taxes; and no one ever thinks of opposing, openly at least, the will of the "mir." When it is remembered that five-sixths of the population of Russia are members of these rural communes, it will be seen that it is not an unimportant feature in Russian life.

There is another matter which it is necessary to understand in relation to the masses of the population—a matter to which Mr. Wallace has devoted many valuable pages, and that is "serfage," and the effects of its abolition. Russians have been proud of emphasising the difference between slavery and serfage, and of asserting, with more confidence than veracity, that slavery never existed in Russia. Mr. Wallace points out the error of this assertion. Indeed, the old chronicles are full of references to slavery as an institution, and to the sales of human beings, and at very low prices too. But undoubtedly in recent times serfage was of two kinds.

The domestic serfs were slaves under another name, and were advertised and sold as chattels; the serfs properly so called lived in villages, possessed property, tilled the communal land for their own benefit, enjoyed a certain amount of self-government, and it was quite an exception to find any of these sold or transferred except with and as part of the estate. The origin of this serfage is, we think, rightly described by Mr. Wallace; and we cannot but agree with him in thinking, that "if serfage did not create that moral apathy and intellectual lethargy which forms, as it were, the atmosphere of Russian provincial life, it did much, at least, to preserve it" (ii. 270). However, serfage has been swept away. On the 19th of February 1861, the autocratic power which had created serfage abolished it; and two of the most interesting chapters of Mr. Wallace's book deal with the consequences of that emancipation. He admits fully the difficulty of dealing with the subject; recognises the fact that the transition process from old legal and social relations and old modes of life is still going on, and that that fact makes it almost impossible to determine accurately "the relative importance and real significance of the phenomena observed" (ii. 311). But we cannot but feel that, so far as was possible, he has arrived at sound and just conclusions as to the consequences of that great social and legal revolution. These conclusions are, that to the proprietors in the northern agriculture zone the abolition of serfage has occasioned serious pecuniary loss, and that the emancipation of the serfs has made agriculture an unprofitable pursuit in these penurious districts. The proprietors in the two southern regions, where the land gives abundant return for the labour bestowed upon it, have suffered no pecuniary loss if the economic changes which have occurred in the last few years are taken into consideration. With regard to the consequences of the emancipation upon the peasantry he has to confess that he is not "prepared to pro-

nounce any very decided opinion on the subject" (ii. 346). But at another page he remarks with truth, "The fact that the question is so difficult to answer is in itself important, and may be taken as a proof that little or no amelioration has taken place in the condition of the peasantry. If any great decided amelioration had taken place, it would certainly have been perceived and proclaimed to the world, and we should not have found, as we find at present, that men who are most capable of judging are precisely those who refrain most carefully from expressing a decided opinion on the subject" (ii. 354).

Indeed, it cannot be doubted that many grave evils have developed themselves as incident to the emancipation. After the emancipation the peasants began to drink more and work less. In the village assemblies "talk" took the place of action, and the noisy members rather than the wise ones had their own way; and, indeed, it seems certain that many of the actions of the "mir" were influenced by *vódka* rather than by sound wisdom. The peasants themselves will admit the correctness of such statements, and deplore the present condition of the "mir," saying, "There is no order now; the people have been spoiled; it was better in the time of the masters." But not only may the village assemblies be "treated" with *vódka*, but the Volost Court, presided over by peasant judges, is also amenable to bribery, and decisions are not unfrequently obtained by means of the same potent spirit. On the whole, it is not to be doubted that peasant self-government in Russia is not in a satisfactory condition, and although there is some exaggeration in the statements which are commonly made concerning it, there is a good deal of truth in some of the faults which are found with its present working. It is said, for instance, that serfage has not been abolished, but that the serfs have simply changed hands. While in former times

they were attached to the land by the rights of the master, they are now quite as much attached to the land by the rights of the commune. The peasant cannot leave his village, as we have seen, without the leave of the community; and if he has left the village, he is still liable to his share of the burdens which the commune has to bear. But he is not free to stay away as long as he chooses, for the commune may recall him at any time, and this power is not unfrequently—in the case of well-to-do peasants who have settled and been successful in the towns—used as a means of extorting money. Even Mr. Wallace, who is certainly not prejudiced against the rural communes, admits that in the northern regions “the commune has really taken the place of the serf proprietors, and holds its members in a state of semi-serfage” (ii. 366).

But there is another objection to the system which must not be overlooked. It is asserted that the commune deprives the peasant of all inducement to improve the land, because the whole land of the village is liable to redistribution at any time, and no peasant will think it worth his while to make permanent improvements which would only become a reason in the eyes of his neighbours for a redistribution which would deprive him of the benefits of his capital and industry. Practically, however, it is not found that this result follows; but that fact must be regarded rather as another proof of the apathy of the peasantry, and their neglect of all the better means of farming, than as an indication of the moral sense of the communities. Another fact is worthy of remark. The emancipation of the serfs had the effect of breaking up the primitive family system, and that disruption has resulted in the separation of the members into separate households—an economic disadvantage, which, whatever may be its ultimate moral and material effects, has in the meantime told against this gigantic autocratic

experiment. But the other incident evils which have tended to discredit this great imperial act of justice, although numerous, are possibly only temporary, and we cannot but think that the ultimate results of this great change will be beneficial to the mass of the Russian people. Whether education, which is making some progress in Russia, will mitigate these evils, it would be difficult to say, but natural to expect. Whether the ecclesiastical reforms which have been recently introduced will tend to make the condition of the peasantry better than it is at present, we may at least hope. If the priesthood could make the peasantry more temperate and more provident, they would do good work. If they could instil into them even elementary moral truths, of which they seem curiously ignorant, they would do much to improve their social and material position. We cannot follow Mr. Wallace through his various chapters, but, as we have mentioned in half-complaint what he has left undone, we must in fairness enumerate what he has effected in his very pleasant as well as very just and instructive book. It is impossible to single out any chapter for special praise. The earlier chapters are fluent travellers' tales, which give one a good notion of some of the external features of Russian life. But even in these there is evidence of careful observation, of wise study, and judicious criticism. If a man has a brain and eyes, he will find things worth looking at and worth thinking about, whether he is on a tarantass, a Volga steamer, or on a bed of sickness and attended by a Feldsher. But there is much weighty matter in these pages. His authentic accounts of the peasant family and of the peasantry of the north are exceedingly valuable. He has understood the great fact that to appreciate a country, even a country with such a mainspring as the will of the Emperor, you must understand the masses of the people. His account, too, of the Finnish

and Tartar villages is interesting, and his sketches of the towns and merchant classes, the Tchinovicks and noblesse, are graphic and good. His work would be an excellent guide-book to Russia, not in the body, but in the spirit, for it tells you nothing that ordinary guide-books tell you, and everything which you wish ordinary guide-books would tell. But we find that in praising each chapter that struck us we are only giving a complete table of contents, for each subject is dealt with in a masterly fashion; and when the matter in hand requires careful thought or speculative acumen, Mr. Wallace shows that he is as much master of these as of the facts of the subject.

We come now, however, to the consideration of a question concerning which we are not in such complete accord with Mr. Wallace as we found ourselves at most parts of his pleasant work. The last chapter in his book is upon "Territorial Advancement and the Eastern Question." At the present time it would be absurd to obtain much intimate knowledge of Russia and her people, to inquire into her somewhat grim history—stained as it is with much blood—to trace her recent internal and foreign policy, without attempting to apply that knowledge and information to the paramount issue of the moment, when our own national interests are so deeply involved in the action which may be taken by that aggressive power. No doubt the important question which is behind all inquiry into the present condition and past history of Russia is—Can we predicate with any certainty what the future policy of Russia will be? Can we say what her intentions are, and can we estimate her power to carry out these intentions, if they are directed against the common peace of Europe, or if, perchance, as many think, they are directed against the peculiar interests of our own country as bound up with those of our Indian Empire? These questions are pressing, and we have, we think, in the books before

us, some means of answering them. We do not propose in any way to deal with the more purely political questions, which were treated in the *Westminster Review* for January last;¹ but altogether apart from the question of Russian designs, as indicated by recent diplomacy, there is a question of Russian designs as indicated by the past history and policy of the ambitious Czars. As to this question, we have the advantage of having before us the distinct statements of an apologist for Russian aggression, and of a writer who takes a very extreme view with reference to the unjustifiable nature of Russian territorial advancement. We think it due to Mr. Wallace to examine with care everything he says, and we think it due to ourselves to be very careful in this regard, as we cannot but think that his conclusions are not justified by the facts which he himself adduces; and an error having the currency of his authority might be peculiarly pernicious.

No fact is more important in relation to Russia than her extraordinarily rapid growth. A thousand years ago there was no Russia; to-day her dominions extend from China to Sweden, from the Polar Ocean on the north to Turkey and Afghanistan on the south. But still she is not satisfied; annexation is going on as vigorously as ever, and her present attitude threatens even further accessions to her large boundaries. Now it is necessary to account for this spread of Russia. There is a well-recognised law which Mr. Wallace states as follows: "The natural increase of population demands a constantly increasing production of grain, whilst the primitive methods of cultivation exhaust the soil and steadily diminish its productivity." It is certain that when the production of grain becomes inadequate to the wants of the people, certain expedients will be adopted either to prevent the increase of the population

¹ "The Turkish Question: Russian Designs and English Promoters of them."

or to increase the production of food. Emigration would be a means to the former ; improved agriculture or commercial enterprise would be a means to the latter. According to Mr. Wallace, the Russo-Slavonians experienced this difficulty, and saw a means of escape by wholesale emigration. The thinly-peopled virgin soil which lay round about them invited their advance. They had no steep mountains or savage seas between them and plenty-producing land ; and as "expansion" was more easy than improved agriculture, they expanded. He also shows that the frequent conscriptions and violent reforms of Peter the Great may have had something to do with the spread of the people over the forests of Eastern Europe and Asia, and over "the steppe" or prairies of South-Eastern Europe and of Central Asia. The forest lands of Europe and Asia could scarcely, we should have thought, have been very inviting to agriculturists, for the lands were only cleared with difficulty, and were anything but fertile when cleared. In the south the land required no clearing, and yielded abundant crops even to lazy labourers ; but the settlers in that district had disagreeable neighbours in the predatory nomadic hordes, who not only robbed agriculturists, but carried them off and sold them for slaves. To us it seems that the invitations to expansion were not very pressing, and that had the advance of the peasantry been due merely to the economic causes to which Mr. Wallace ascribes it, they would have found high-farming easier than territorial advancement, or would have adopted another expedient to continue the necessary proportion between production and consumption. Mr. Wallace admits that the colonisation of the steppe was not effected without violence, and the story of that violence is "one of the bloodiest pages of European history." These circumstances, then, make us doubt the correctness of his inference, that it was simple economic causes and the

invitations of geographical position which caused this "spontaneous movement of the agricultural population." This "spontaneous movement," however, was made towards the south, not without the frequent assistance of the whole military strength of the country, and at last, as a self-defensive measure, by the complete subjugation of the troublesome neighbours. The expansion in these instances considerably outran the spontaneous movement, for there were large tracts of country so thinly peopled after their annexation that it became necessary to organise immigration, and large numbers of Germans, Bulgarians, and others have settled in these wide lands. On the whole, then, we cannot accept this theory of expansion towards the east as satisfactory; but when we turn to Mr. Wallace's explanation of the similar movement towards the west, his reasonings are even less convincing. The western neighbours of the Russo-Slavonians were numerous, and their soil was poor. There could be no spontaneous movement in that direction. Here their expansion was the work of the Government. A long course of diplomacy, alternated with war, secured an advance in this direction. No doubt the kings of Poland were enemies, and formidable enemies, of the Czars of Muscovy; and the latter, in order to make way against their enemies, felt it necessary to import into their country something of Western civilisation. But then the peculiar geographical disabilities of Russia had to be considered. She was shut out from free intercourse with the West. Her one port, Archangel on the White Sea, was blockaded during a great part of the year by ice, and the necessity of having other means of commerce with the West was pressed upon her. Hence the acquisition of the eastern coast of the Baltic became the chief object of her foreign policy. All these objects were successively attained. Poland was disintegrated, Sweden lost her trans-Baltic possessions, and the Grand Duchy of Fin-

land was ceded to Russia in 1809. Mr. Wallace, although alluding to the facts, is silent as to any justification of them. Still he is perfectly candid, for he admits (ii. 438) that high political aims, "such as the desire to reach the sea-coast," was one of the chief motives of expansion; and he also admits that the "foolish lust of territorial aggrandisement for its own sake and the idea of forwarding the commercial interests of the nation" were causes which contributed to this policy. But he is careful to observe that no man of official influence indulges in dreams of possessing India, and that the wish for territory for its own sake is dying out. The wish, however, to increase the commercial advantages of the country is certainly not dying out, and we may surely still have to encounter some of these "high political aims" which have influenced the policy of Russia in the past. Russia is at the present time changing in many respects. We have pointed out that her manufactures are greatly increasing, and that their quality is rapidly improving. These circumstances will make her the more earnestly desire to find ready access into the markets of the West and the East, and this implies an expansion in more than one direction. To reach the West she even now requires a better waterway than the Baltic affords to her; to command the markets of the East she may well believe that it is best to possess the markets of the East. Her progress towards the East along the Amoor is not insignificant; and it will not be difficult for Russia to find an excuse, in the laxity with which China performs "her police duties towards her neighbours," for increasing annexation of that populous territory. Already Russia has possession of a Chinese province, and will hold it at least until the Chinese Government sends a force sufficient to maintain order! How much longer it may deem it prudent to continue its occupation it would be difficult, after some experience of Russian promises,

to say. But to us the advance from Central to Southern Asia is of more importance. Mr. Wallace seems to imagine that the present Czar has no ambition to conquer India. To a country desirous of extending its commercial relations, the possession of a country like India would not be altogether unimportant, and when we find that there is no resting-place in the steppes which lie between the Russian boundary and that of our Indian Empire, and that Russia is bound to advance, it is not to be wondered at if the English people are suspicious of that expansion. But the question as to the necessity of this advance is at least doubtful. Our author seems to think that Russia has only two alternatives along the whole of her Asiatic frontier—a military cordon or annexation; and that consequently the idea of a “neutral zone” between the Russian and British frontiers cannot for a moment be entertained. Russia has always been, and still is, willing to volunteer police services to her neighbours; and the policeman who enters to keep the peace generally turns out to be in time the man in possession. But why should Russia alone be unable to tolerate the lawlessness of Central Asia? why should she find expansion southwards so necessary, when England has not been forced into annexation in a northward direction by the rascality of the zone which is at the present time neutral, and lies between British India and Asiatic Russia? Mr. Wallace thinks that Russia must push forward her frontier until it reaches a country possessed of a Government able and willing to keep order within its boundaries. But even when that limit has been reached, may not high political aims then come in, as they did in the case of Poland, Sweden, Finland? May not Russia feel a deep sympathy for the servient races in India, as she at present does for those in Turkey? We confess we see no limit to the aggressive and expansive policy of Russia.

It is admitted that Russia is anxious to forward her commercial interests. Can it be doubted that the possession of Constantinople would further these interests? Has Russia no ambition to possess the finest harbour in the world? Even Mr. Wallace says, "The aggressive tendencies of the Russians in the direction of Constantinople are nearly as old as Russian nationality, and much older than the Russian Empire." And if the east coast of the Baltic was all-important to her for a time, how much more important would "the key of the house" be now? There is no doubt a religious element, a race sympathy, and a political element which draws Russia towards the Bosphorus. Here there is no room for "spontaneous movement" of populations, for the valley of the Danube is thickly peopled; here it is not necessary to annex a neighbour's country in order to defend their own, for in the case of each of the eight wars which have been waged between Russia and Turkey since the beginning of the eighteenth century, Russia has been the aggressor; here there can be no doubt we are face to face with a "high political aim." We know that Russia has aspired to be a great naval power. She secured the northern shore of the Black Sea, not without difficulty, not without bloodshed; but when she had attained that end she had only half succeeded. The Black Sea has only one outlet, and whoever can command the Bosphorus can command the Black Sea. Russia cannot be, has never been, insensible to that advantage, and the other advantages—for there are many—which would accrue to the possession of Constantinople. That our way to India might, in the event of Russian supremacy at Constantinople, and in case of a war between this country and Russia, be impeded, Mr. Wallace seems to deny.¹ He seems, however, to admit certain facts from which that

¹ His views in this respect differ widely from those of most writers. See Major Russell's "Russian Wars with Turkey," pp. 285 and 304.

follows as a necessary inference. So long as the Bosphorus and Dardanelles are in friendly hands, the Russian fleet can be shut up in the Black Sea; but if, on the other hand, the Russians were in possession of the Straits, their ships would have a free passage into the Mediterranean, and might at least impede, if not bar, the road of our water-communication with India. We do not propose to follow Mr. Wallace in his further remarks upon the policy and current conduct of Russia, as these are to some extent met by anticipation in the article to which we have already referred. But we must add a word or two concerning the less temperate utterances of the writer of "Savage and Civilised Russia." He holds a very strong, and not altogether unjustifiable, view of the aggressive tendencies of Russia. He has traced the history of that country, and has translated a great deal from Karamsin's history about Ivan the Terrible. He has, too, made a study of more recent works, and, amongst others, of Mr. Schuyler's, Mr. M'Gahan's, Captain Burnaby's, and Mr. Mitchell's; and his conclusion, which he supports by quotations and arguments—although with little method and sometimes a little slipshod expression—is that the imperial policy of Russia, pursued through centuries with unflinching cruelty and unvarnished diplomacy, has been aggressive, and that one of the principal objects of its aggressiveness for centuries was correctly revealed by the old prophecy mentioned by Karamsin, "that the Russians should triumph over the children of Ishmael, and reign over the seven hills of Constantinople." His own opinion¹ may be fitly expressed in the words

¹ "Russia," he says, "except when aggressive is nothing. A growing strength of expansion and absorption form her cardinal policy" (p. 149). "The policy of Russia is simply universal dominion, aimed at by incessant intrigue and conquest" (p. 135). "The natural action of her (Russia's)

of the same historian, who said, "The object and character of our military policy has invariably been to seek to be at peace with everybody, and to make conquests without war; always keeping ourselves on the defensive, placing no faith in the friendship of those whose interests do not accord with our own, and losing no opportunity of injuring them without ostensibly breaking our treaties with them;" and he goes far to make good his position. If the past actions of a country are to form a basis for reasoning as to probable policy in the future, then it behoves us to take a suspicious view of Russian policy. If the avowed intentions of the Emperor Nicholas to Sir Hamilton Seymour—that "if England thinks of establishing herself at Constantinople, I tell you plainly I will not allow it. For my own part, I am equally disposed to take the engagement not to establish myself there, as proprietor that is to say, for as occupier I do not say"¹—and the like are to be believed, then we must hesitate before we believe in the good faith of the present philanthropy. Philanthropy has been the constant pretext of Russia for wars during which human nature was outraged by the cruelties which were perpetrated; and although the stories of some of these atrocities are now old, human nature stands aghast that men could perpetrate such barbarous crimes. No nation has succeeded in making war so utterly horrible and revolting as the Russians. They

government," says Major Russell, pp. 299, 300, "is essentially ambitious and aggressive." See also Lord Palmerston's letter to Lord Clarendon of 22nd May 1853, quoted in appendix to "Russian Wars with Turkey," p. 315.

¹ But this was not the only occasion on which the partition of Turkey and the possession of Constantinople were made the direct objects of Russian diplomacy. The Empress Anne in 1736 concluded an alliance with Austria for the partition of the Sultan's dominions. In 1786 a similar convention was made between Catherine II. and Joseph II. And Alexander I. and Napoleon made a similar arrangement at the Peace of Tilsit in 1780.

have given examples, these philanthropic people, which human beings will do well to avoid.

But the author of "Savage and Civilised Russia" is of opinion that a great mistake was made at the conclusion of the Crimean War by the Allies, in not exacting a war indemnity; and that, in the event of another such struggle, and in the event of a similar success, the allies who have to enforce honesty upon the miser of the dominions of the world would act more wisely, having the conduct of Germany at the end of the Franco-German War before their eyes. The author takes an unfavourable view of Russian policy;¹ and we cannot say that, on the whole, his view is not in substance a correct one. He is not so well informed as to the country as Mr. Wallace, but he seems to have read with care the literature which bears upon the traditional and present policy of Russia. His book professes to be a handbook of the subject, and the various opinions of which it is mainly composed seem to have been carefully collected, although somewhat chaotically associated in the work before us.

But if we come to a conclusion adverse to that of Mr. Wallace, and in accord with that which "W. R." would impress upon us, if we believe that Russia is an aggressive and grasping Power which, although its hands are already too full of lands and countries—the spoils of the nations—is still to continue its career of territorial robbery, and is now clutching at Turkey with its inordinate avarice and with its vindictive voracity, then it becomes a question of importance to determine upon which side the chances of success really lie. If Russia and Turkey go to war in 1877, it will not be the first struggle between the great Northern Power and the Sultan. A glance at Major Russell's

¹ His view is that Russia's stages of development have been "savagery, subjection, triumph, and aggression."

excellent work on "Russian Wars with Turkey" will show how many contests have been waged between these two countries—will show that the fault of the war invariably lay with Russia, and will afford some materials which may enable us to form a conjecture as to the probable results of any future contest between these states. Major Russell not only treats of the more ancient wars between that torrid and that frigid Power, when the conditions of the struggle were very different from those which exist at the present time, but he gives the particulars of the wars of 1828 and 1829 in great detail, deriving his information from such admirable works as those of Count Moltke, Colonel Chesney, Fonton, Valentine, and Alison. The account here given of these wars is exceedingly clear, and is not without its important lessons, which may well be learned by those who have the conduct on either side of any future military collision between Russia and Turkey. To some extent, it is true, the conditions have changed. Russia had then more powerful naval armaments than Turkey, whose fleet had been almost annihilated at Navarino; while now it is certain that Turkey could do far more than hold her own at sea, and might, in the event of the Russians getting near Constantinople, harass her assailants' flanks from the safety of her floating fortresses. Now, however, Russia is incomparably more powerful on land than she was in 1828, and could probably send 250,000 men across the Pruth, and 150,000 men over the Caucasus; and when her troops are compared with those of Turkey, their great superiority cannot be denied. The resources of Russia, by which the long issues of a war must be tried, are immensely greater than those of Turkey. She has from 70,000,000 to 80,000,000 peaceful subjects, while Turkey can only number a population of 14,000,000, and many of these are inimical to their oppressive masters. But even after a careful

review of these and the other wars which are so well described in Major Russell's work, even after looking at his statistics of the comparative resources of these two countries, while we may be prepared to admit that the chances are very much against Turkey, we cannot but think that a war between Russia and Turkey must be carried on at imminent risk of failure to the former. The Turkish power is decaying, but in a war in 1877 many things would fight on Turkey's side. The climate would try—might ruin—the Russian troops, as it did the forces of Diebitch in 1829; and a dwindled force only would arrive at the Chekmedges. But, on the supposition that Russia would make war to gain Constantinople—and any other reward of a campaign would be as bad as failure—what chance has she of success? Major Russell seems to think that, under all the circumstances, Turkey might, even without foreign assistance, maintain an almost equal warfare with her formidable antagonist. But if Constantinople were now in danger, would she fight alone? We are more alive in these days to our interests in the East than formerly, and it is a proverb that the "Eastern question can only be solved at Vienna."

Would England and Austria stand aside and allow Russia to possess some of the richest land in the world, and one of the finest cities and harbours on the earth? We can hardly think that, if Constantinople were in danger, Turkey would fight alone. It has been, and is now more than ever, the policy of Europe to keep Constantinople out of the hands of Russia, and that the interference of the Great Powers would prevent the consummation of Russia's long and ardent schemes is, we think, notwithstanding General Rotislav Fadéeff's opinion, which is quoted in an appendix to Major Russell's book, not to be doubted. Indeed, the Imperial City is peculiarly capable of a successful defence against Russian aggres-

sion, as has been shown by Von Moltke in one of his masterly chapters;¹ and if Constantinople were rescued from the Russian grasp, the war would, in so far as Russia is concerned, be barren of satisfactory results. It is true she might cross the Balkans and mask Schumla. It is true she might beat the feeble levies of the Turks in the field, but the narrow isthmus at the Chekmedges, near the Bosphorus, would again, as it has done before, afford a very strong line of defence; and, even were that passed, there is a last line of defence, behind which the city, the possession of which, according to Napoleon, makes a power mistress of the world, lies. And here, we think that the Ottoman Power alone would, with all the chances which would be in its favour, be able to defy its larger enemy. Here at least we imagine that Russia would have to encounter an opposition of a very different character from that of the effeminate troops of the Sultan, and would have to return after wasting wars, not only with the Great Powers, but with an unrelenting climate, with empty hands to its barren home. The progress of Russia would be stayed for a season, not only in that direction, but in others; the legs which wear her "seven-league boots" would be crippled by the fruitless and exhausting efforts of so great, so bloody a nature. If we are right in our estimate of these chances, surely the wisdom of peace will force itself, even at this last instant—surely it has already forced itself—upon the wily politicians of St. Petersburg, and their ambition of conquest, their desire for military glory, their anxiety to add the rich plains of Bulgaria to the already overgrown empire, and their long-cherished hope to acquire the most important seat of govern-

¹ See also General Mackintosh's "Strategic Tour in Bulgaria," in which he shows that the nature of the ground, "if properly strengthened and defended, would put Constantinople beyond the risk of capture."

ment in the world, will be stayed and sated for a time by the most ordinary motives of prudence. Whatever happens, more, much more, will have to be written about Russia in time to come. If she still aspires to a career such as that which she has already achieved by dishonesty and violence, her history will find a place in some future Newgate Calendar of the nations. If, on the other hand, she is content to fold her hands over her wide lap, or to use them in plying the sickle and the shuttle instead of the sword and the rifle, if she will try to make the home conquests of peace and extend her dominions by the fleets of commerce instead of the mailed fleets of war, her history will be written amongst those of the practical philanthropists of the earth, and "her name will be great among the nations."

V

THE CRADLE OF THE BLUE NILE¹

WHEN one meets in society or in the casual intercourse of a journey some one who knows a friend, one says, "What a small world it is;" and it is quite true that most of us live in very narrow circles, and our little "beats" cross one another very often. That there is a large world outside our daily walk to business, or our small evening round of pleasure, is, however, a fact; and it is not unimportant to have that fact brought home to us. The daily sympathies of men are very limited, their daily thoughts confined and straitened; and it is a service to them, to have their thoughts and feelings informed and widened. Now genuine books of travels do that for us; and it is no unimportant part of the best culture to be open in our sympathies and complete in our knowledge. A great deal of our vice and crime arises from our too exclusive self-reference, or, at least, from our too exclusive reference to our immediate environment. Any larger views of life, of responsibility, any more generous feelings which will extend a man's cares to others as well as himself, will tend to make his conduct more excellent and his actions more beneficial to his fellow-men. In this way then really good books of travels in countries with which we are unfamiliar are of true service to us.

¹ "The Cradle of the Blue Nile. A Visit to the Court of King John of Ethiopia." By E. A. de Cosson, F.R.G.S. In two volumes. London, John Murray, 1877.

But at the present time a book about Ethiopia or Abyssinia has not only this indirect ethical interest for us, but has a very pertinent bearing upon practical politics. This world, although it is large enough to contain continents which have only been penetrated by one or two knights-errant of geography, and nations of whom we have only vague stories and no real knowledge, although it is so large that there is still much to explore, has still within recent years become much smaller in comparison with man's wants and capacities than it was formerly, by reason of the immensely improved modes of conveyance of men, of commerce, and of information. We have the world in an abridged form since steam was utilised.

But the change which has taken place in that respect has not been without many important effects upon international relations. Long ago distance could prevent peoples going to war, and could sometimes do what goodwill could not—secure peace. Miles in the old days made countries independent of one another; and commerces were the conveyance of things of luxury, not the carriers of necessities as in these days. Now, there is no such thing as an independent nation; we are all interdependent.

A civil war in America causes a famine in Lancashire. The declaration of war between Russia and Turkey sends up the price of the quartern loaf in every town in Britain. But even in a much more vital way nations hang together, and the interests of the one are connected with those of other States. We know that in this Eastern war many British interests are, if not jeopardised, at least distantly threatened. We know that as a commercial nation she has a peculiar interest in the water-ways of the East being kept open, and as Constantinople is a key to these commercial corridors of nations, it is important that Constantinople should be in the possession of a power whose interests will

not clash with those of this country and of Europe in that respect. But we have a water-way to India, and any obstacle to the free use of that road by our commerce or our ships of war, would be a serious injury to Britain. A part of that water-way is formed by the Suez Canal, in which we are interested not only as a ship-owning power but as a share-owning power too, and intimately connected with our interest in the Suez Canal is our interest in Egypt, and in so far as this present war threatens any of these home-interests of England, the present war is a matter which affects English policy, and calls for English statesmanship. But this war is not only a question of English policy. No nation in Europe but has important questions of policy and interest to debate in relation to this strife on the Danube. Germany is between Russia and France, and is aware of it. Austria, with many home-troubles, must feel that the disintegration of Turkey might result in the ultimate disintegration of her own Empire-kingdom, and we can understand that Italy might contemplate such a disintegration with compensated equanimity. But short of these grave issues, it is scarcely to the interest either of Germany or Austria that their great river-way to the sea should be in the hands of a jealous power like Russia. We have only referred to the Eastern Question by way of illustration to show how many complicated questions of policy are involved in the misgovernment of her Christian subjects by Turkey, and the lamely-excused aggression of Russia. These current facts show how very interdependent the nations are. Indeed no nation is now free to do as it chooses either within its own boundaries or in its relations with neighbouring states. There is a large public opinion amongst nations, and no country is free in the long run to disregard the moral sense of mankind.

Our own immediate interests in Egypt make the

study of her policy and prospects more interesting to Englishmen than that of most other nations. We have within recent times had an expression of opinion from the Home Secretary upon our foreign policy as to Egypt which is not unimportant. Mr. Cross has distinctly stated that our interests in this Eastern war are not to be overlooked, and that these interests would be injuriously affected if the ugly limits of this struggle were to extend to the Bosphorus, to the Suez Canal, or to Egypt; and has shown that the government regard our national interests as ultimately associated with those of that country. It is a theory of some amongst us that the purchase of the Suez Canal shares was, in the mind of one member of the Cabinet at least, the first step in a series of important political measures which would have resulted in the formation of a great English Empire in Africa; and even now there are many, whose astuteness is not often at fault, who would advocate the pursuance of the policy which that purchase was supposed to inaugurate.

But whether we are prepared to go so far or not there can be no doubt that many of our interests are bound up with the interests of Egypt, and consequently with the relations of Egypt with her neighbour nations, and that the internal prosperity and civilisation of that country are by no means unimportant to us. So important did our government regard the financial prosperity of Egypt that they sent out a Special Commissioner (the Right Hon. Stephen Cave), whose duty it was to report to the English government as to the condition of Egyptian finances, and that action was taken not in the interests of the creditors of Egypt but of Egypt herself.

But we have other interests in Egypt. It was through English enterprise that gigantic discoveries were made in equatorial Africa, and those discoveries have enured to the advantage of Egypt. Not only were discoveries

made by Englishmen, but Sir Samuel Baker became the Khedive's servant, ostensibly for the purpose of putting down the slave trade in the Soudan, and perhaps more really for the purpose of annexation; and even more recently Colonel Gordon has been carrying on that work and has assumed the rule of the Soudan and become the mediator between Egypt and Abyssinia, and even as we write we see that he has succeeded in negotiating a peace. All these circumstances make English people take an interest in the well-being of Egypt, and especially an interest in Egypt in her relations with Abyssinia. Our attention was painfully directed to the latter country by the perilous campaign which we had to undertake in 1868 to secure the freedom of certain British subjects from that country of fastnesses, and our painful interest has been continued in both these countries by the existence of that trade to which our country is an enemy—the trade in men and women. Of this trade as carried on in Upper Egypt and Ethiopia we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

In the meantime, however, it will be evident that the circumstances to which we have alluded prepared us to welcome a book written by a gentleman who had journeyed from Massowah to Adowa, from Adowa to King John's camp at Ambachara, thence to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, and from Gondar across the desert *via* Abou Haries to Khartoum, and again across the desert from Berber to Suakin, and treating of the countries through which his very varied road lay. True, Mr. De Cosson went there only for amusement. The avowed object of his journey was to shoot large game on the Takazze. We do not know that a good supply of Westley Richards rifles, of elephant guns, of explosive bullets, of fine animal spirits and a plucky desire for dangerous sport are the best preparations for an instructive tour through a country like Abyssinia.

We do not wish to object to a gentleman going to shoot crocodiles if he likes it ; we may feel a little pity for the monkey which General K—— shot (vol. i. p. 61) simply for amusement, as our author felt an anticipatory pity for the parrot which he did not kill ; but it is no maudlin sympathy with the hippopotami of Lake Tzana that makes us object to a shooting excursion being made the foundation of an instructive book of travels. It is upon far different grounds from these. It has been well said that to bring the wealth of the Indies from the Indies you must send the wealth of the Indies to the Indies, and it is quite certain that to bring valuable information home from another country you must take valuable information to that country. Send an idiot to Africa and see what he brings back. Send, on the other hand, a well-informed man of science—who is learned in languages, who is a competent draughtsman, who has a high motive in his researches, and who is familiar with botany, with geology, and with ethnology before he goes, and you will find his contribution to human knowledge, when he returns home, will be an invaluable one.

Not that Mr. De Cosson is not a man of ability. Without doubt he is possessed of very various talents, and he has written a very readable book ; but had he been as thoroughly informed as we could have wished our typical explorer to be, he would have written a more valuable book. Possibly it might have been less pleasant reading, for Mr. De Cosson's book is very amusing and never hangs heavy on the hand. He apologises for his style in his preface, but the apology was unnecessary, for, on the whole, his style is good. Still there is a good deal of closeness sacrificed to more attractive but not more valuable qualities. Mr. De Cosson has evidently read widely in the English poets, and few pages of his book are without some pleasant quotation. True these are not inapposite,

but they do not really add much to our knowledge of Abyssinia. Then the story of why the people of Espertina do not like to be asked what o'clock it is—which seems to be because in old times the people of that town, when they got a sun-dial, were so proud of it that they built a roof over it; or how St. Isidore, who was a stupid boy, from seeing the stone of a well worn by a rope, came to the conclusion that continual study might wear a way even into his head and thereupon become a saint—these and the story of Leila and the woodpecker, although interesting in themselves, do not inform us much as to Abyssinian manners and customs.

We could have spared these if Mr. De Cosson could have given us more accurate information as to many matters in which we are interested, and in connection with which he gives us no information. His knowledge of botany is somewhat limited, he has not studied geology, and his remarks upon questions of race are to a large extent taken from other books. Indeed, a good deal of Mr. De Cosson's information has been gathered from other works upon Abyssinia, and although his reading has been extensive, still we could have done that for ourselves. What we want from the traveller is something we cannot get at the British Museum.

It would perhaps have been wrong to expect that our author should have gone to Abyssinia perfectly equipped as an explorer, for we gather that he is still a young man (vol. i. p. 178), and we do not wish to be ungrateful to him for what he has done. His observations, if not always accurate, are always acute, and if he has failed to add very much to our knowledge of Ethiopia, he has at least given a very pleasant sketch of an arduous journey which was not without its dangers, not without its inconveniences. Mr. De Cosson does not, unlike many sportsmen, bother us too much with his shots. Indeed, on the whole we cannot see that he had very repaying sport. He shot at a good many things, and we have

no doubt that he may have killed much that he does not care to chronicle. He does not, either, make too much of the dangers to which he was exposed—indeed, on the spot he seems to have made too little of them, as, for instance, when on the way from Wakhni to Galabat he followed the lion (vol. ii. p. 163), and when he took a deep-water bathe in the Blue Nile notwithstanding the imminent presence of crocodiles, because he was assured that these animals would not attack a man unless he was in shallow water (vol. ii. p. 220). We confess, although he does not in these pages exaggerate his dangers, he seems to make more of an inconvenience in Abyssinia, and that is the vermin, than it deserves; but possibly that is in his anxiety to be amusing, and doubtless “fleas” are an amusing subject. He does not, however, dwell upon very serious matters, like the ophthalmia from which he suffered. Apart from that, however, we are glad to see that, notwithstanding very trying exposure, after very great hardships, and after very many privations, he seems to have enjoyed very good health, although after leaving the country and arriving at Jiddah he suffered from fever.

But while discounting Mr. De Cosson’s performance we would wish to recognise with respect his efforts to do one great practical service to Abyssinia. He travelled from Massowah to the court of King Yohannes with General K——, who was conveying letters from Her Majesty and Earl Granville, at that time our Foreign Secretary, to King John, and he offered to become the bearer of the King’s answer to these despatches, on condition that the King would say in these letters that he would put an end to the slave trade within his dominion. At a conference which our author had with the King—fixed for five o’clock in the morning, but afterwards, in deference to European sleepiness, postponed until ten—the King had consented to abolish slavery; but he seemed very unwilling to put the same

promise in writing and to seal it with his seal. But Mr. De Cosson was most anxious to have the King pledge himself in writing to what he had promised in conversations; for he thought that the King would hesitate before he broke such a written promise. It was evident that the writing was a much more important matter than the casually mentioned intention, from the fact of King John's unwillingness to accede to Mr. De Cosson's request that he would add a paragraph promise to that effect to the letters of which he was to be the bearer. Indeed, Mr. De Cosson had to leave the King's camp at Ambachara without the letters, and it was only at the last moment that King John made up his mind to do as he was desired, for the despatches were sent after our author, and were only delivered to him as he was leaving Gondar. Still, there the promise was in writing, and we only hope that it is now in fact. But whether it is or not Mr. De Cosson did his best to introduce a beneficent change into the internal policy of Abyssinia. But Mr. De Cosson's journey has been of service in other ways. Notwithstanding the fair promises of Egypt with reference to the suppression of slavery; notwithstanding the parade she made to Gondokoro with a view to the suppression of that vile trade in Central Africa, our author found that she was conniving at that trade within her own dominions. He went through a public slave market at Galabat, a town at which Egyptian troops were stationed; and he gives in an instructive appendix the pretenceful action which the Egyptian authorities take to prevent that trade in the Red Sea. It is important that we should know the truth of this painful matter. It is important that we should know that there is a trade in Abyssinian slaves carried on through Egyptian territory. It is important we should hear the account which is given by M. de Sarzec, who was French vice-consul at Massowah, of the way in which Egypt pre-

tends to free slaves, and also that the Khedive's steamers are employed to convey slaves from Africa to Arabia. We do not wish to dwell upon this subject. It has been dealt with recently in these pages, but we wish to protest against such a breach of faith upon the part of Egypt, and against a passive acceptance of such duplicity upon the part of England. We have interests in Egypt. Are not our interests sufficient to warrant a grave expostulation, are they not sufficient to warrant the suppression of that trade by the force which we possess? Mr. De Cosson's efforts in Abyssinia in that direction point to the imperative duty of this country in that respect. If a private gentleman can, in an interview with the King, extort a promise from him to do away with slavery, surely England might, with the force of her authority and the persuasions of her friendship, have induced King John to take that decisive step. But we shall have occasion to return to the question of English policy—or in recent times, no-policy—in relation to Abyssinia hereafter, and as to our laches in respect to the slave trade both in Ethiopia and Upper Egypt. Here, however, we would set out shortly the information we have gathered from Mr. De Cosson's work.

We learn that Abyssinia is a remarkably beautiful country. It has all the zones of climate upon its high hills. It is clothed with a luxuriant vegetation, and contains within its boundaries the heats and jungles of the tropics, the high hills and tablelands which elevate its populations into the clear, bracing climate of more temperate zones. That it is exceedingly picturesque with its high-peaked hills and vast precipices, its quick rivers, which carry down large quantities of fertilising mud to the Nile, with its mimosas and palms. The impression of the beauty of the country and the richness of the vegetation, the variety of the flora and fauna of the country, is well,

although miscellaneously, conveyed by the pages of Mr. De Cosson's diary. Already the exports of the country—which is well suited for the cultivation of grain, of coffee, of cotton, and other very marketable commodities—are not unimportant; but if the character of the population was changed the exports might be infinitely increased and the prosperity of the country promoted. The cultivation, we gather—although we do not find any direct information as to the agriculture of the country nor about many other things—is at the present time lamentably deficient, and altogether inadequate when compared with the richness of the soil and the excellence of the climate. The people are, as a rule, lazy, and look always to to-morrow for opportunities of doing what ought to be done at once; and further, they seem to think that any occupations except those of war and the chase are unworthy of true men. The existence of a great many birds and beasts of prey in their forests and skies and rivers may have made them hunters, while the existence of neighbours of prey, who have been encroaching on the boundaries of Abyssinia, may have made them warriors. At the time that Mr. De Cosson visited the camp at Ambachara there were 40,000 men in it, and it would not be unjust to say that to some extent the warlike character of the people has been forced upon them by Egypt.¹ As we said before, however, we see that through the instrumentality of Colonel Gordon peace has been made between Egypt and Abyssinia, and we hope that that will give the hardy people of the latter

¹ There can be no doubt, we think, that the policy of Egypt with reference to Abyssinia has been one of encroachment and aggression, a policy which has been detrimental both to the country unjustly robbed of territory, and the country which spent much of its borrowed money—losing a good deal of its poor credit—for the sake of a paltry territorial aggrandisement. As to this see what King John said to Mr. De Cosson, vol. ii. pp. 40, 41, 43.

country an opportunity of laying aside their shields and spears and using the plough and the reaping-hook. Still, something more must be done to produce real prosperity in Abyssinia than to give her the large opportunities which peace will afford. The people are a fine hardy race, and although some of their mental and physical characteristics would hold out hopes of their capacity for civilisation, they are lazy and procrastinating, and the liberal lands of the country will not yield all they might unless the people learn to take from her with persevering effort and with better methods than they have yet learned to use. At the present time the gift which is most valued in Abyssinia is a gun; and although they have had Portuguese bridges as at Gondar, Portuguese and Indian castles as at Gondar, and fine churches as at Axum, before their eyes for 300 years, they have not learned how to build an arch, they live in mud huts, and have to seek fords in their rivers. The Abyssinians had a chance of learning how to civilise themselves from the Portuguese when they settled in and christianised the country. The Ethiopians seem to have become Christians, after a fashion, without having become civilised in any fashion. But even now we find that attempts at further or other christianising are going on, for there is mention in these pages of various missionaries; all these means have, however, as we have said, failed; the Abyssinians are still savages. It is true that Mr. De Cosson does not tell us very much about their habits or doings, and is content to dwell more upon his own journey amongst them and upon their fleas than upon many important matters which would have given us some notion of the real life of this curious people. That they sit and stare and gape at a stranger we do hear, and that they prefer to look at a monkey even to a stranger; but what they do when neither strangers or monkeys

are there to stare and gape at we do not know. We have some descriptions of feasts in the house of Ras Bariaü at Adowa and of the King and his courtiers at Ambachara, we hear of the "tef" cakes they eat and of the "tella" and "tedge" which they drink, of the "Kuaries" which they wear ; but little or nothing is said of their real domestic life and of their common avocations, from which and from which alone their true condition can be ascertained. The life of nations is really observable not in council chambers but in cottages. It is not lived in parades and at triumphs, but in quiet common ways of living—not through great holidays but through small ordinary days. And much as we desired this information Mr. De Cosson does not touch upon it. He speaks of the custom of hospitality—a custom which varied from the extreme of penurious, grudging giving or withholding to a generous giving of excessive viands such as innumerable cakes of "tef" and whole cows or sheep, and he also refers to the anxiety which Abyssinians display not to speed, but to impede the parting guest—a habit which delayed him for a month at Adowa—and to their more disagreeable habit of very indiscriminate lying. Still some traits we have mention of, as for instance, the strictness with which they keep Lent, the avidity with which they eat raw flesh, the respect they have for sanctuary, and the like ; but he does not vary the impression that the Abyssinians are very rude and very uncivilised.

That such a country should be in such rude hands is an injury to the world. That a country which might send out corn and coffee and cotton to the wants of Europe should remain untilled, should remain a haunt for wild beasts and scarcely less wild men, and an emporium of precious mud for lower Egypt, is not a matter of small interest to the civilised world, which has in many places to wrench small harvests from

the hard hands of penurious lands. As we pointed out, we are not independent but interdependent states, and we cannot disregard the waste of such a generous country as Ethiopia. Even if we had no immediate interests in Egypt, we would have a real practical interest in these highlands of Africa. It is a matter of selfish importance to us as a nation, it is a matter of importance to the world when we regard the many wants and the scant means that are at the disposal of men to supply them, that Abyssinia should be cultivated, and that the race which inhabits this most excellent soil and fine healthy country should be civilised. The human race is, after all, a whole, and no nation can remain in selfish isolation, priding itself upon a culture, upon a civilisation, which it withholds from its neighbours. There are large human duties between countries of the same nature as those which exist between individuals. Between men there is a perfect communism in good thoughts, good manners, and good actions which constitute culture and fair conduct. No man can make a private property of these. The very exercise of his functions as a man makes a gift of these to all who come in contact with him, and so the education of society proceeds. So also ought it to be between nations. A country has no right to the fatal privilege of aloofness from its neighbours. Just as man is suited for society, so are nations suited for intercourse, and as the intercourse in society is educational to the individual, so is the association in the comity of nations civilising to these. The practical question here, however, is, how that intercourse is to be brought about? Our experience teaches us that civilisation sails far oftener with the fleets of commerce than with the propagandist excursions of the Church. No doubt missions have contributed to the cultivation of mankind, but the influence for good is not likely to be so great, so wide-

spread, or so permanent, as when civilisation is carried into the mart, and where a man cannot transact his ordinary business without having examples he may profit by presented to him. We have seen that the Church has failed in Abyssinia. Would not commerce succeed? But how can we get commerce to establish relationship between Abyssinia and England. Commerce is only a matter of exchange. English wares, and with them English men, English manners, English probity and English civilisation will find their way into Abyssinia only if Abyssinia has products to offer in return. We have seen, however, that at the present time Abyssinia has little or nothing to export. She sends some ivory, some corn, and some slaves to the markets of Upper Egypt; but before these could be materially increased the character of the people would require to be changed by the very civilisation which it is our object to bestow upon them. It was the opinion of Livingstone—and few opinions are more worthy of respectful consideration than his—that the only way to introduce civilisation into Africa is to open up the commerce of the country, to establish colonies in the midst of the half savage tribes as centres of European civilisation, to associate mission work with these, to educate the children and to teach the natives by practical example the advantages of industry and peaceful occupations. We cannot but think that that is the only way by which Africa will be civilised. Depend upon it, that if you have taught these great lessons, you will have prepared the way for the easy acquisition of greater lessons than these. Make a man industrious, and he will soon become honest and religious. To try to make him the last first is to begin at the wrong end. We do not teach children by doctrine, but by example, and we are content if they learn to imitate good actions, confident that in time they will learn to have good motives too. Thinking thus then with regard to the necessity of an

attempt to civilise Abyssinia, and as to the means by which this could be done, we cannot but agree with Mr. De Cosson when he says, "We know that the breech-loaders and Gatling guns of the Khedive have failed to subdue the courage of the Abyssinian mountaineers in their rocky strongholds, but I certainly think it a pity that, after the Magdala campaign, when the roads and railways were all there, England did not at least *try* the success of establishing a colony and developing the resources of this fine country and people, instead of abandoning them to their fate, after causing the death of their King. I firmly believe that the advancement of civilisation and commerce, to say nothing of Christianity, would be materially assisted were we even *now* to arbitrate between Egypt and Abyssinia, and secure to the latter the means, so long withheld from her, of transporting her produce to the shores of the Red Sea, and communicating with other countries" (vol. ii. pp. 43, 44). We cannot but think that even now something might be done to establish colonies in that country. Are we all so happy, are we all so well off in this our England, with its uncouth weather and drivelling skies, that we could none of us find happier lots and pleasanter days on the high plains and under the brilliant skies of Abyssinia? Could we not all breathe more freely and work more advantageously if we were not so closely packed in sterile corners of the world, but if the wide and healthy regions of Africa afforded us an ampler air and a wider elbow-room. We could, we think, without doubt, spare some of our surplus population to these lands which require men so much. What would America have been to-day if it had not been colonised from Europe? The hunting-grounds of savages. What is it to-day? A nation contributing vast resources to human happiness, vast increments to human thought—a nation which is in many respects sending its riper civilisation back to Europe, and thus

benefiting the world. That Africa might become a second America we cannot doubt. These recent years have shown the existence of large equatorial lakes, we know of its wonderful rivers, which make highways to its very heart. We hear of its possessing minerals which are more precious than the precious metals, and that it has a climate healthier by far than that of India. It is not utopian to hope much for such a country as Abyssinia, but if these hopes are to be realised it must be through the honest dealing of European nations, and not through the foul play of Egyptian policy. If Mr. De Cosson's work has in any way contributed to make England more alive to what seems to us an obvious duty, in this respect he will have done good service to the country which offered him its rude hospitality and its sport for some months.

VI

ENGLAND IN EGYPT¹

It is not worth while dissembling the fact that the tragic success of the false prophet has been the ugly means of preventing the English Government falling into a grave, an almost irreparable error. The order had been given for the return of three thousand of the British troops now in Egypt to this country. This order was the result of various causes. There are certain European Powers that are jealous of our position in Egypt. There is a certain section of the Liberal party which believes that temporary occupation is apt to "evolve" into annexation, and who are particularly anxious to see the Government conforming its conduct to their ideas of policy.² There are

¹ "Egypt and the Egyptian Question." By D. Mackenzie Wallace. London: Macmillan & Co. 1883.

² Sir Wilfrid Lawson, in speaking on the 5th of November, said that as to the withdrawal of the troops "he was sure Mr. Gladstone was just as anxious as he was to get those troops out of Egypt as fast as possible, and the Cabinet were trying to get them out. The troops were only there to assist to maintain a Government which the people of Egypt loathed and detested; to assist a grinding taxation of the people, to assist to pay the usurers who had lent money to the Egyptian Government. At this moment the wretched Egyptians were more miserable and plundered than they had ever been before. He hoped there was not a single Liberal in Parliament or out of it who would refuse to support the Government in removing the troops. No doubt such a course would meet with the strong opposition of the Jingoists and the military and glory lot. Lord Salisbury had said this was to be the test question. Well, he (Sir Wilfrid) accepted the challenge of Lord Salisbury. He accepted it on behalf of the Government, on behalf of the Liberal party, and he believed on behalf of the great body of the people of this country. When they understood this question they would declare that the might of England should not be used to rivet a chain upon a downtrodden and oppressed nation."

some, too, who think that the burden of supporting the army of occupation, which has been laid upon Egypt, is too heavy for the country. All these circumstances weighed with the Government, and the opinion of Sir Evelyn Wood, that the safety of the capital could be ensured with a smaller military establishment, no doubt had influence in determining the Government to take a step, some part of the responsibility of which had been taken by our commanding officer in Egypt.¹ The order, as every one knows, was given—foolishly given; for although we admit at once that possibly the three thousand men might have been a sufficient force to retain in Egypt, could that force at the same time have secured the safety of Cairo and of Alexandria, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the contemplated withdrawal of the British

¹ Sir E. Baring, in writing on the 9th of October 1873 to Lord Granville in answer to the two questions: "1. Is it safe to withdraw the British garrison from Cairo? 2. To what extent is it consistent with the preservation of public order that the total British force in Egypt should be reduced?" said, "As regards the first question, I am of opinion that the British garrison at Cairo may be with safety withdrawn. As regards the second question, I am of opinion, after consultation with General Stephenson, that the total force in Egypt, which consists at present of about 6700 men, may be reduced to three battalions of Infantry, one battery of Field Artillery, one battery of Garrison Artillery, and one company of Engineers, making a total of about 3000 men and six guns. I agree with General Stephenson in thinking that this force should be concentrated at Alexandria. General Stephenson has informed me that a small expenditure of money will permit of barrack accommodation for this number of men being provided at Alexandria. Should Her Majesty's Government be pleased to approve of the proposals which I have now the honour to make, the British force in Egypt will be amply sufficient to preserve order in Alexandria, and to maintain the honour of Her Majesty's arms against any force that it may be supposed, with any reasonable degree of probability, it may have to encounter. Moreover, the moral effect produced by the presence of this force, or even, indeed, of a force considerably smaller than that proposed, will of itself, in all probability, suffice to ensure the tranquillity of the country. It should, however, be clearly understood that the main responsibility for preserving order throughout Egypt will devolve on the Egyptian Government. I trust that they may rely upon the full moral support of Her Majesty's Government in the execution of that task."

flag from Cairo was a serious error.¹ Governments are very often dependent for their power upon symbols. A look of power is often as efficacious as a blow. It may be true that while we held Alexandria we had our foot in the doorway, and prevented the door being shut against us; but our object ought to be not to secure a means of return to Egypt, in case of necessity, but to obviate the necessity of any return. "Stay a little that we may make an end the sooner," is an apothegm of Bacon's which is applicable to our duty in the Levant. The possession of the capital was to the native mind an indication of the power of Britain which was worth many displays of physical force. The withdrawal from the seat of government to the seaboard of the Mediterranean—or, a few months later, for that too seems to have been in contemplation, to Cyprus or Malta—would have been to the Egyptian mind a confession of weakness which, with Orientals, is almost an invitation to violence and aggression. It is for these reasons that we say that the events which have led the Government to countermand that order have been the means of extricating them from a difficulty into which their too scrupulous regard for the opinions and sensibilities of certain jealous Powers, and of a certain fanatical section of their supporters in the House of Commons, was about to precipitate them. The whole action of the Government in Egypt has, we think, been right, but it has been action which had the weakness of excuse in every fibre of it. "Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument," but the great argument goes too far if it unnerves the hand of action. The Government has, we think,

¹ In this view we are at one with Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, who in a note written after his work had gone to press, p. 506, states his views clearly and strongly. "So far as the moral effect on the population, on the ulemate, and on the native Government is concerned, the presence of a single battalion in the Cairo citadel is worth more than the presence of half-a-dozen regiments at Alexandria or Ramleh."

always done right, but it has been at the point of the sword of circumstances. They have hung fire on most occasions, until it was almost too late. They have forgotten Napoleon's maxim that "incidents ought to be governed by policy, not policy by incidents." There is really some pith in the Tory criticisms of our hesitating action—a hesitation which has gone far to mar the effect which it was the object of our policy to produce. However, the Government has, on the whole, prospered upon the policy of waiting on events. It was forced to take an active part in the settlement of the Egyptian question when important opportunities were being frittered away in conference, it has now been forced to continue its present hold upon the country by the events which have happened in the Soudan. We can now see with some certainty the good consequences of the first step which the Government took under the duress of incidents, and we can see how fatal further delay would have been to the whole fabric of our Eastern policy. We cannot but think that "luck" has again stood our statesmen's friend, and that time will show how foolish was the step which their feet were raised to take.

It may often be thought that it is a serious objection to Party Government that there is a danger that the necessary continuity of foreign policy may fail to be consistently preserved. Indeed, there is a temptation to a Ministry that has risen to power on the mistakes of its predecessors, and while the public mind is smarting with the stimulus of having administered deserved punishment, to reverse the policy of the Government which has fallen into popular disgrace in particulars quite unconnected with the party triumph; and it is probable that if this temptation were frequently acted upon by the party coming into power the institution of government by party would before very long fall into deserved contempt. The possibility that a

Government could be seriously inconsistent to its own policy of the past in its actions of the present, when that past policy had not involved the Administration in failure, while the present was only slowly bearing the wholesome fruit that was to be expected from such cultivation, is one which does not seem to have been seriously contemplated. If, however, we are to believe the current actions of the Government, if we are to credit the statements made on their behalf, that is the position that they seem anxious to occupy. A series of actions which have been forced upon them have made them masters of a situation the holding of which at the present time seems of paramount importance, and the Government propose to withdraw from the position. If they succeed in their endeavours they will, before many years have passed, cut one of the sorriest figures that ever a Ministry did in history. In the meantime, as we see, their action has been again happily frustrated; but as the events which have stayed their hand may soon leave them free to carry out their previous intention, it becomes a matter of great importance to inquire into the history of our policy in Egypt, that we may determine what our duties to the people of the country are, how our interests are affected by the condition of that country, and what our policy in relation to the Egyptian question ought to be in the future.

As we have said, we understand that the motive for this purposed aberration on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers is that a section of the Liberal party disapprove of the action of the Government in the past, but is willing to let bygones be bygones if they will act upon its scruples in the present and withdraw the troops from Egypt. That section of the party is by no means the largest or most powerful; but it is a section that is gaining ground, and whose influence is more and more felt in the government of this country. It is

a section, therefore, which it is well, if possible, to conciliate. The other strong reason for the Government "turning its back on itself," as Sir Boyle Roche said, is, that it must have regard to the susceptibilities of Continental Powers, and especially to those of France. It is somewhat strange to have those occult influences—the morbid scruples of some extreme politicians, and the susceptibilities of our Continental neighbours—to consider in determining the probable action of our Government. These elements are worthy of consideration, but if they are to have such commanding weight *now*, they ought to have been called in to assist in the shaping of our policy sooner. We have by our acts pledged ourselves not to be influenced by the trivial fears of a wing of a party, or the jealousies of a rival Power which finds out too late that it made an egregious mistake some eighteen months ago, and desires to recover the advantage out of the foolishness of a friend which it lost through its own vacillation and timidity. We are by our acts embarked on a policy, and these scruples and regards for the feelings of France come too late. If they were to be regarded they ought to have shut the mouths of the guns at Alexandria. They ought to have kept alive—what we are convinced was a serious evil—the Dual Control. We disregarded the voice of Sir Wilfrid Lawson when we went to war, we disregarded the susceptibilities of France when we put an end to that instrument of joint control and divided interest, and it is too late now to have our policy determined by any such trivial considerations.

We propose to show that the continued occupation of Egypt by an efficient force is at the present time absolutely necessary, and we are strengthened in the conviction which we desire to express by the belief that the opinion of the best authorities coincides with our own; and that the valid reasons which can be shown to exist for our being in Egypt at all are valid

against a precipitate withdrawal from that country. So far as we have been able to ascertain, public opinion is against the Government, if their project is to withdraw the troops from Egypt at an early day. We are aware that it is an exceedingly difficult thing to determine the drift of public opinion, and many men are in the habit of thinking that their own thoughts must be current, they are so reasonable *to them*. We do not desire to fall into such an error, and to correct it is, as we say, exceedingly difficult. To trust to the Press is not altogether wise, for there is a section of journalism which thinks to make public opinion by its blatancy of assertion instead of by its weight of reason; and that section, knowing that very often to say public opinion is in a certain direction is to lead public opinion in the direction indicated, does not hesitate to use that rhetorical figure. Still, as it is necessary to attempt to discover in what way the majority of our fellow-countrymen view this question, we have done our best to arrive at a conclusion, and are prepared to take the responsibility if we are in error. Our opinion is that the majority reason somewhat in this way:—“We spent a great deal of money in sending out ships and men to Egypt. We sacrificed a great number of lives, and we were prepared at one time—for no one but a very confident and fortunate General thought that Arabi’s power would crumble at a touch—to sacrifice more. We have even, after our victory, assumed duties in the country. We have been reorganising its Courts, its Army, its Police. Why? Merely to trundle out again because France is susceptible, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and a few more like him, suspect that occupation is a word which, when a little blurred by time, will read ‘annexation’? No, that would be foolish, unless we can have a guarantee that the circumstances which took us to Egypt will not recur: that the interests for which we fought will be respected;

and that with a view to both these ends the country will be well and wisely governed."

But apart from the opinion which is in the mouths of men, there seems to be very weighty arguments in favour of a patient policy in relation to Egypt. With the view of ascertaining what we are bound to do in the future, it may be worth while to look at one or two matters of recent history. How do we come to be in Egypt at all? There is always a difficulty in writing of events very soon after they have happened. We cannot judge real proportions if we are very near to the object of vision, or the circumstances of history. One holds a friend at arm's length to judge how time has handled his features; and we must hold events at arm's length to be able to judge fairly of them. The history of the rebellion in Egypt cannot yet be written. Many of the circumstances of it are detailed with minute accuracy by Mr. Mackenzie Wallace in his work on Egypt, but there are some obscure questions which we must wait on time to clear up for us. One error has been very persistently committed in certain important quarters, and that was the misconception of the nature of the revolt. It is a mistake to regard Arabi as a mere military adventurer without any real popular support. It seems certain that he was the leader of a very strong public opinion—an opinion which would have hustled Tewfik from his throne if he had not been propped there by the arms of England. This view, and the reasons which make it a sound conviction, are clearly stated in the work before us, and we do not propose to reproduce any part of the proof in this place. Whether that popular movement was fostered by encouragement from without, what amount of extraneous recognition was given to Arabi, and by whom, are questions which it is impossible at the present time to answer. Light upon that matter would be exceedingly valuable at the

present juncture ; but it is not to be had. The revolt, then, whatever its true significance may have been, and whatever encouragement may have been given to its leaders, assumed such proportions as to threaten the lives of Europeans in the country, and all the European Powers, with the exception of Turkey, came to the conclusion that it must be put an end to by force of arms. The Sultan was invited to intervene, but did nothing. The National Party was daily becoming stronger. The demands of the English and French Governments that the Cabinet—which was the creature of the revolt, and which, while it had Sherif Pasha at its head, had Mahmoud Sami as its War Minister—should resign ; and that Arabi and his two colleagues in revolution should be removed from Cairo—had been refused. Still, neither of these Governments followed up their ultimatum with war. The National Party, however, followed up its successes with the Alexandria massacre of June 11. Meanwhile, the Conference was sitting, and nothing was being done. Admiral Seymour, however, was threatened by the forts at Alexandria and opened fire, and then Lord Dufferin announced to the Conference the intention of the British Government to take a more active part in the work of restoring order in Egypt, and Lord Granville invited the French Government to co-operate. Then, strange to say, France hesitated. M. de Freycinet had not been successful in Tunis. There was—there always is now in France—a curious apprehension that Germany is looking for a suitable opportunity, while France is unprepared or otherwise occupied, to anticipate and prevent the retaliation which will one day requite the insults of the campaign of 1870. There were, too, in Paris, miscalculations as to the proportions of the enterprise, and M. de Freycinet made a pretence of co-operation while really folding the hands of France in her velvet lap. The

endeavours made by Russia and by Italy to frustrate the operations of England had no effect. So it was with the sanction of Europe that we undertook the work of restoring order in Egypt. It seems to have been argued that when we entered upon the enterprise Europe made some conditions with us, and that faithfulness to the letter or spirit of these makes it incumbent upon us to withdraw our troops at the earliest possible moment. We confess that we do not find that the sanction of Europe was conditioned in any way whatever. It is true that M. de Nelidoff, on behalf of Russia, tried to make terms for the Anglo-Turkish military convention, but Lord Dufferin was firm, and M. de Nelidoff's suggestions were still-born. It is true, too, that Italy desired to make the permission conditional, but owing to the stubborn sense of Prince Bismarck, that tram-melling suggestion also died a natural and early death. So it came about that England alone was prepared to do what all Europe recognised as necessary to be done, and that consequently it was with the unconditioned sanction and approval of all the European Powers that we went to Egypt.

But it is evident that the good wishes of Europe, although withdrawing diplomatic obstacles to the project, was not the cause of the enterprise. Order is a very precious thing, but the nation is a Quixote which tries to rule political waves straight in any part of the world in which they happen to stagger a little off the perpendicular. The desire for the peace and prosperity of the people of Egypt might possibly be a pleasant after-dinner topic for a philanthropic statesman, but it would not have justified the interference of a Power which could not possibly be affected by the disorder which it deprecated. It is evident that the rebels who threatened the Khedive in some indirect way threatened England, and that England cannot afford to be callous to popular fevers in Egypt, and consequently we not

only had the approval of Europe for our action, but we had the strongest motives to do what we actually did. Our interest in Egypt has long been tacitly recognised. The fact that we joined with France in so many of the untoward incidents in the past political and financial history of that unhappy country was an assertion of the fact that our interests were deeply involved in the country which lay between our Indian possessions and our home dominions. The fact is that between India and England there is only sandy Egypt, and some seas which are insignificant to a sailing nation. Even before there was a Suez Canal—which made these seas, as it were, continuous, and brought us into a sort of physical contact with our Indian Empire—it was felt that Egypt was an important element in the Eastern Question. Since the Canal was constructed, and since we, as *the* great commercial Power trading between the East and the West, have become dependent upon it for our commerce, and we, as a great military Power, have become dependent upon it for the ready access of our troops to India, and the ready access of our Indian troops to Europe, the importance of dominating the Power which dominates that water-way has become infinitely greater. Here there is no question of party politics. A fanatic may desire to see the British Empire lopped of its great Eastern and Western arms, and nothing but the island trunk remaining. But such vapoury policies have not been broached by any practical statesman, and all practical men are of one mind as to the expediency of continuing our association with our great Indian dependency. Lord Beaconsfield's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal was a proper monetary recognition of our interest in that ribbon of sea through the desert, and it was because of our paramount political and commercial interests in the Suez Canal that we were justified in interfering in the

recent troubles in Egypt. This, then, is the permanent interest which we have in Egypt—an interest which we are bound to have regard to, which we have undertaken a war on behalf of, and which it is necessary, it seems to us, to recognise in our future action with regard to that country. Mr. Mackenzie Wallace tells a story of Lord Palmerston which shows that in statesmen of all complexions the necessity of a careful supervision of Egyptian affairs has been recognised as a paramount political duty. He says that Lord Palmerston's objection to the construction of a practicable water-way between the Gulf of Pelusium and the Red Sea was founded on the belief that, if such a canal were constructed, England would be compelled, sooner or later, to annex Egypt. He was averse to such annexation, and hence his opposition to the scheme of M. de Lesseps. Now, we also reject at present the idea of the annexation of Egypt, but we are persuaded of the necessity of our retaining a very strong hold over the Canal. If we retain the position we at present enjoy in Egypt, if we remain there long enough to make Egypt a firm and sure ally, if we carry out the work of reform which we have begun, which will, in the end, have the effect of preventing the interference of other States with the internal affairs of Egypt—interference which is always a menace to our interests in that great highway—then we believe that no such necessity as that which was contemplated by Lord Palmerston will ever arise. But if, on the other hand, we throw away our present golden opportunities, if we leave the country to be again a prey to anarchy, and a prey to the vulture nations which gloat where anarchy is, we see the probability of war to regain an ascendancy which we seem willing to throw away, and of an ultimate annexation of the country to prevent further relapse from that order which we are willing to leave only half established. It is our duty

now to take such steps as will prevent, either directly or indirectly, the annexation of Egyptian territory by any rival Power. It is our interest to train Egypt in such a way that she may by her future conduct give no pretext for any foreign intervention ; it is our clear policy to secure that the influence of no nation shall predominate over our own at Cairo, and the only feasible way that we see to attain all these objects is by retaining our military hold upon Egypt at the present time. We cannot but think that here our views, candidly expressed, are at one with the more valuable and instructed opinions which are only covertly hinted at in Lord Dufferin's General Report :¹—

“A great part,” he says, “of what we are about to inaugurate will be of necessity tentative and experimental. This is especially true as regards the indigenous Courts of Justice and the new political institutions, which will have to be worked by persons the majority of whom will be without experience or instruction. Had I been commissioned to place affairs in Egypt on the footing of an Indian subject State, the outlook would have been different. The masterful hand of a Resident would have quickly bent everything to his will, and in the space of five years we should have greatly added to the material wealth and well-being of the country by the extension of the cultivated area and the consequent expansion of the revenue ; by the partial, if not total, abolition of the *corvée* and slavery ; the establishment of justice, and other beneficial reforms. . . . Her Majesty's Government and the public opinion of England have pronounced against such an alternative . . . but though it be our fixed determination that the new *régime* shall not surcharge us with the responsibility of *permanently* administering the country, whether directly or indirectly, it is abso-

¹ General Report, dated February 6, 1883.

lutely necessary to prevent the fabric we have raised from tumbling to the ground the moment our sustaining hand is withdrawn. Such a catastrophe would be the signal for the return of confusion to this country (Egypt), and renewed discord in Europe."

Under all the circumstances we see that we were right in going to Egypt; we had a right and a public mission to reduce the ragged elements of rebellion to order, we had deep interests in undertaking the duty Europe entrusted to us, and we shall only secure those interests by continuing to discharge patiently the arduous duties which devolve upon us as a nation.

Nubar Pasha, one of the ablest Egyptian statesmen, if not the only Egyptian who deserves the name, said that the Egyptian question is a question of irrigation; and any one who makes himself acquainted with the present condition of the country will come to the conclusion that the epigram was justified by the facts. Egypt is an agricultural, not an industrial, country, and its great wealth depends upon the great productiveness of its soil. For hundreds of centuries the Nile has been carrying the rich fields of Central Africa into the Mediterranean, and burying them beneath its blue waters. But in doing so it has created the Delta, and its floods have spread much of the fertile mud upon the surface of the Desert. The real wealth of Egypt is in that mud. But the causes which created the Desert, over which the mud is, as we said, in some places spread, are still extant, and would very soon turn the garden into a desert again, were not something done to prevent such atavism. To secure crops from the latent fertility of the Nile mud it is necessary that the land should be watered, and as rain does not fall in Egypt¹ it is necessary to inundate or irrigate

¹ There are occasional showers in the northern part of the Delta, but these seem to have occurred only in recent years, and are by some said to be due to the construction of the Suez Canal.

the land. In this matter, the Nile again comes to the help of the Egyptian, and by overflowing its banks supplies the moisture at the same time that it deposits the fertile mud. But that moisture would not be supplied, that deposit would not be made, unless the people of the country exerted themselves to secure these blessings. Torrents for the most part take what torrents bring, and in order to secure that the Nile may not take away with one wave what it has given by the other, it is embanked, and long ditches are constructed from the embankments to the slopes of the hills which form the Nile valley. These dams or embankments form great basins (the largest covers about 80,000 acres) which are filled when the Nile rises in July, and are emptied when the Nile begins to fall either by sluices where such things exist, or by cutting the embankments where there is no such engineering appliance. It is upon the land so prepared that the crops are sown which are to be harvested in the following March. This primitive system of Egyptian agriculture is still practised in Upper Egypt. But below Assiout a more civilised system, known as that of perennial irrigation—as distinguished from that which we have described, which is spoken of as annual inundation—is practised. There the agriculturist protects his fields from inundation during high Nile by means of embankments, and waters his land during low Nile by means of various contrivances. By means of this process, the lands are made far more continuously productive than those of Upper Egypt, which are condemned to flooding for a great part of the year and to sun-baked sterility for another. Under the system of perennial irrigation the lands become suited for the growth of more remunerative products, such as maize, cotton, and sugar-cane, than those which can be secured by the more primitive method. The nice questions which have to be practically answered

in connection with this "higher" farming we need not enter upon here. Of course, seeing that the Nile water not only supplies moisture but fertilising mud, any system which allows of a deposit of the mud from the water before the water is applied to the land which is to be cultivated would be a faulty one. And, again, seeing that the water of the Nile is useful not only for giving moisture and fertility, but for cleansing the substratum from the saline flood which annually percolates through the land of Egypt, the nice adjustment of the supply to these various requirements becomes a matter of very considerable difficulty. These matters, although interesting and important, are beside our present purpose. What we desire to point out is, that the introduction of the perennial irrigation system has enormously increased the productiveness of the soil of Egypt. The exports in 1862 were estimated to be of a value of $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, and in the year 1874 they amounted to £14,000,000. Under these circumstances, the importance of irrigation to the future of Egypt can be readily understood. Many of the evils of the past have been connected with the forced labour upon the public works, which were necessary to the continued prosperity of the country. But now that Egyptian rulers have burdened their country with debt, now that a grave economic crisis is threatening the country,¹ it becomes all-important to consider the irrigation question; and the truth that the Egyptian question is in one sense the question of irrigation dawns upon one. If we remember that but for a greatly improved irrigation system the soil will not continue to produce with an abundance sufficient to enable the rural population to pay the taxes; that the failure to do so will increase the immense burden of private debt under which the fellaheen are labouring; that debt will prevent prosperity, and that distress

¹ Wallace, p. 465.

and adversity will lead to that discontent which is the cause of national disorder, which in its turn is the pretext for, or the invitation to, international interference,—we will see that it is no longer a time to rely upon mechanical contrivances like *shadoufs* and *sakkiehs*, it is no longer expedient to allow the canal system, upon which, of course, the prosperity of the country mainly depends, to be in a state of lamentable deficiency. There are three methods by which water can be supplied to the land of Egypt: by a canal leading the Nile water by an easy gradient to the lands in question; by filling canals while the Nile is high, and allowing them to retain the water, as reservoirs, until it is wanted when the Nile is low; by raising the Nile water into the canals by means of pumps, or by raising the water in the river by means of a barrage or weir. Each of these systems has its advocates, for each of these has its merits and defects. But, as we understand, the present very able Inspector-General of Irrigation is inclined, and wisely inclined, to use any means which may be at hand to secure his object, and with this view the Government have, we hear, upon his advice, purchased of an English company an important pumping station, where the pumps are capable of supplying water for some 200,000 feddans. But one of the great difficulties that Colonel Scott-Moncrieff will have to contend with is the condition of the arterial canals. Many of these have been allowed to silt up. Although forced labour has been rigorously exacted of the fellaheen, the labour seems to have been injudiciously expended; and when we remember that the whole system of administration was corrupt and cruel, that circumstance cannot excite surprise. But the evil that men do lives after them, and the terrible results of the corruption of *baksheesh* have to be met and overcome to-day. The *kurbash* is no longer to be used, even the soldiery are to be paid two-and-a-half

piastres a day, and the *corvée* can no longer be relied upon for the work which will be necessary to make the arterial system of canals once more efficient, and ready to answer to the throbbing of English engines which will send the precious blood of Nile water through every arid fibre of the country. That this is necessary to the future well-being of the people of Egypt none can doubt; that it is essential to the peace, independence, and good government of that country, no one will deny; and yet that these great works can be effected without the aid of capital which is to find its way into the country it is ridiculous to suppose. There is no capital in Egypt which can be applied to these purposes. That capital will find its way into Egypt if such useful work is to be done, is very evident. But it will find its way there only on condition that it is guaranteed either actually by some solvent guarantor, or indirectly by the presence of England in Egypt. While we remain there we are responsible for the peace of the country, and it is that peace which is the highway to prosperity. The very uncertainty as to the intentions of our Government in that regard has put an end to, or delayed enterprise which would have carried out a system of perennial irrigation on a larger scale than has hitherto been tried with British money, and must necessarily prevent capitalists from dabbling in affairs in which they have so often had their fingers burned. Again we say, then, that the irrigation question—if not *the* Egyptian Question—is intimately associated with it, and that the continuance of the British troops in Egypt is, even when looked at in this aspect, necessary to the prosperity of the country. If we desire to avert a grave economical crisis with a view not only to the happiness and welfare of the fellahen, but with a view to that quiet and contentment which is essential to the preservation of the interests we have in Egypt—interests

which took us there with war in our hands—interests which keep us there at present with constitutions and reorganisations in our mouths—we must endeavour to encourage the flow of capital into the country, without which the necessary irrigation works cannot be efficiently carried out, and without which the great resources of the country cannot be adequately developed.

We have only mentioned incidentally the many economic questions which, if Egypt is to be the home of quiet, and not the hotbed of annoyance, must be solved.¹ The indebtedness of the fellaheen is a very serious evil. One of the best bids Arabi made for popularity was the wiping out of this burdensome debt which oppresses a heavily-taxed people. And the effect of our interference has been to re-impose these burdens from which the people imagined that they were relieved. This circumstance has had the effect of rendering our rule irksome and unpopular; and it will take some time before we secure that confidence and good-will which are so essential to the maintenance of our paramount influence in Egypt. The fact that the debt is heavy, and that if the peasants are allowed to settle

¹ The announcement that the revenue of Egypt for the current year will fall short of the expenditure ought not, if the history, civil, military, and sanitary, of the year is remembered, to be a matter of surprise. But that the deficit will amount to two millions eight hundred thousand pounds (Egyptian) is a matter for serious regret. But it is not merely that Egypt cannot make both ends meet at present, there is a necessity for undertaking further liabilities, which will make this economic problem more difficult in future. It is probable, although the Indemnity Commission has not completed its labours, that the claims by foreign residents against the Government will amount to about four millions of pounds. The war expenses, which Egypt must necessarily incur at this perilous juncture, will be another source of debt. How Egypt is to be exonerated from these financial difficulties without the help of this country it is difficult to see. That the position of solvency is not irretrievable we are certain, but it can be secured by means of a financial readjustment which can only be undertaken with the active co-operation of England. We cannot, as Mr. Forster said at Bradford in December, "govern these Oriental countries merely by advice."

their differences with the Greek money-lenders, the result will be in all probability the expropriation of a very large number of the fellaheen—are not matters which we can afford to overlook or ignore.¹ Peasant-proprietorship is a prescription which we are never tired of formulating for home evils, and we cannot therefore be callous to the dissociation of the peasantry of Egypt from the land of that country. How to meet the difficulty is, however, an exceedingly difficult question to answer. We do not believe that the cause of the evil is the incorrigible improvidence of the fellaheen, as some would persuade us; and we rather see the explanation of this painful social condition in the bad government, and the inordinate taxation of the past. If the latter suggestion is the true one, then it is evident that we ought to ensure the better government of the country in the future, and endeavour to see that our puppet government does not fall—as it is only too apt to do—into the oppressive and rapacious ways of its predecessors. While this indebtedness lasts—and it will last and increase while the system of taxation and corruption is unreformed; while expropriation is on a large scale possible; while the economic crisis which we have hinted at threatens—our best efforts for the peace of the country are thrown away, for we have here in the midst of the people the whole of the elements of a dangerous social explosive.

Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, in his first chapter, likens Egypt proper to a long walking-stick or fishing-rod, surmounted by a small fan—the fan representing the Delta; and his work deals principally, as was to be expected, with the very important questions which have to do with that portion of the country which is represented by the fan, and the top-joint of the fishing-rod.

¹ A Commission is at the present time sitting to take evidence as to the condition of the tax-paying fellaheen, with a view to determine how their heavy debts are to be paid.

Apparently his pen travels where his feet have gone, and we do not gather that he has visited the Soudan. Wherever he has been he has carried very careful eyes, a very judicious mind, and where he leads we are well satisfied to follow. But it does strike one as a little strange that he should have been able to write such a large book—perhaps a little too large for the matter it contains—without mentioning the slave trade, or alluding to the very many important problems in the life of Egypt proper which are intimately associated with the future of the equatorial provinces. Recent events have, however, shown that no careful historian of Egypt can, with any hope of writing accurately of the future, afford to neglect many important considerations which lie outside of the horizon of Mr. Mackenzie Wallace's work. Until November 19 most of the critics of the policy of our Government in Egypt had apparently confined their attention to what was happening in Egypt proper. The proposal of the Government to withdraw the British troops from Cairo showed that no danger was anticipated in that quarter, and the assurance of Sir Evelyn Wood that he would answer for the preservation of order in Egypt if a certain number of the troops were withdrawn from the country, seems to have been made without any reference to possible reverses in the Soudan and on the shores of the Red Sea. The defeat of the Egyptians at Toka and their precipitate flight, the annihilation of the force under the command of Hicks Pasha, the subsequent defeat of some seven hundred men who were sent out of Suakim to reconnoitre, these circumstances have made many persons aware that the Egyptian question has wider issues than they had hitherto imagined, and that the work which England had to do in Egypt might be much more onerous than many persons in England would have us believe. It is quite true that the objects with which we went to Egypt,

the purposes for which we remain there, have never been explicitly stated by the Government. Vague statements of intentions are, no doubt, prudent when the shifty future is far from certain. It is always more convenient to say what your intentions were after events have happened, than before you, by your actions, contribute to results. We do not say that that has been the morally pusillanimous attitude of the Government in relation to the Egyptian question. But we do say that all their explanations have been vague, and our actions and policy in Egypt seem to have crept through the holes of accident instead of walking boldly towards some well-defined and clearly perceived end and object. There have been assurances that we had duties to perform in Egypt, and that we would not remain there after these had been performed. There have been statements that we went to Egypt with a view to attain definite ends, and that when these have been attained and secured, our mission will have been completed. The country would be better able to judge of the performances of the Government if they had more explicit promises to measure them by. But, no doubt, from the point of view of those who have to make the promises, the more general these are, the greater latitude is given to conduct, and possibly the greater credit may be gained if the chapter of accidents turns out to be readable in any way in favour of this country. Still certain very definite conclusions may, we think, be drawn, if not from the words of the Government, from the acts which they have been compelled to do. We opened fire upon the forts of Alexandria because the defences of that port were being strengthened against us. We landed troops and fought Tel-el-Kebir with a view of putting an end to the revolt against the Khedive. We interfered in the question of the disposal of the prisoners which we had taken, who had not offended against us but against the ruler of Egypt. We

appointed inspectors-general of irrigation, surveyors-general of the land, and we assisted in the re-organisation of the army, the police, and the judicature. Now, from these circumstances, some valid inferences can be drawn as to our mission in Egypt, as to the duty we have gone there to perform. It is evident that, in the opinion of the Government, a state of disorder in Egypt is in some sense a danger to this country. It is evident, that any circumstance which would prevent British influence being felt at all in Egypt, would be regarded as a serious evil, and that it was not merely because Arabi was at the head of a very threatening revolt against the Khedive that we went with arms to Egypt, but that any revolt against the ruler of that country might in the end prove inimical to the interests of Britain. If these principles were not at the roots of our policy, we do not understand the policy at all. We cannot see why we, why Europe, should have thought armed intervention necessary in Egypt unless there were other interests involved than those of a weak ruler and an insurgent national party. Indeed, apart from our own interests, our whole sympathy ought to have been with the wordy programme of Arabi and his accomplices; and we think it would be wrong to shut our eyes to the fact that, had we not interfered, had we not overthrown the power of Arabi which had come to such a sudden height, the result to the people of Egypt might have been as happy as it will be under the British tinkered rule of Tewfik, and much happier than it would be if we quitted the country and allowed the old order of things to take the place which it used to occupy. It is true that foreigners would have been excluded from the country; it is true that Turko-Circassians would have been excluded from the offices which they had for years monopolised; it is true that there might have been a massacre of the Copts; but that ultimately the

condition of the fellaheen would have been improved, seems to us more than probable. The reason of our interference, the right we had to interfere, was that we had vital interests in Egypt, and that these interests were safer in the hands of Tewfik, strengthened and supported by our countenance and guidance, than in any other hands. The reason of our meddling in the organisation of public departments, of law courts, of police, of army, is that the order and well-being of the mass of the inhabitants of the country is a condition of orderly and quiet government, and that our interests are bound up with the internal peace and the rule of law in Egypt.

Under these circumstances, our work is not done when we have overthrown one military rebellion; we must take steps to prevent another. It is not against the shock of Arabi's arms that we must defend the Khedive, but against any shock which may threaten, until he is strong enough to repel force without our assistance. It is these considerations which make the overthrow of Hicks Pasha, and the other events which have happened in connection with the rebellion in the Soudan, matters of grave import as affecting the question of our position and continuance in Egypt. We cannot leave Egypt while danger threatens. Our influence in Egypt must be maintained. That, we understand to be ground which we hold in common with those gentlemen who clamour for the withdrawal of our troops. Their contentions, as they can be gathered from their somewhat hysteric utterances, we take to be that we have to consider the British taxpayer rather than the Egyptian fellah; that we ought to cut down rather than enlarge the foreign responsibilities of this country; that we promised Europe that we would withdraw from Egypt when our work was done, and that it would be dishonourable to remain now that our work is completed; and, finally, that our moral

influence will be greater in Egypt if we withdraw the hand of violence and recall our troops. These arguments we have already dealt with in some detail; but as to the one point concerning our influence, we cannot but add a word in this place. To us it seems certain, that if in the face of reverses in the Soudan we withdraw our troops from Cairo or the country, we shall strike a blow at our influence in Egypt which will be irreparable. If we were convinced, as some politicians seem to be, that our influence in the country is baneful, then, by all means, strike a blow at it. But in that case, we fail to see any meaning in all the carefully-planned events of the past eighteen months. If our influence is, as we believe, beneficent, then it is a kind of political suicide to do anything which will jeopardise its continuance. But it behoves us to remember that if we should annihilate our influence in Egypt, that is not the end of the matter. We might be content to retire from our dominant position in that country if no other European Power were to take our place—if we could simply leave our shoes without their being held to be an invitation to other feet. But one thing is very certain, and that is that France, which made one great mistake, is most anxious to retrieve it. Circumstances, as we have seen, were exceedingly favourable to us and exceedingly unfavourable to France. A policy of timidity upon the part of M. de Freycinet threw the game into our hands; but ever since Tel-el-Kebir the French have been conscious of the error of their timidity. Now, however, the position is different. England has got the chestnut out of the fire, and France wants to benefit by the temerity which ran the risk of burning its fingers. There can be no question that France is jealous of our position in Egypt; that after Tel-el-Kebir she despaired of regaining the footing which she formerly held in that country, and that it is only since we have seemed so anxious to

abandon all that we gained by our "walk-over," that her hopes of being once more dominant in Egypt have revived. It is no secret, that recently our neighbour has become more solicitous to ascertain the intentions of our Government as to the withdrawal from Egypt, and has even endeavoured to strengthen the expressed intention to withdraw the crutches which keep Egypt from falling, and to expedite the execution of what, looking at our earlier actions, would be little less than a practical joke in diplomacy. Will this country be content to leave Egypt to be the seat of French influence? Shall we have done our duty if we leave that country to be again, as it was before, the scene of an unhallowed struggle between our own subjects and those of France for predominating influence. It is possible that either nation might alone exercise a control which would be beneficial to the people of Egypt. But we cannot conceive that anything more inconsistent with the true interests of the populations of the valley of the Nile could exist than the rivalry of two great Powers for the controlling voice in the councils of Cairo. These are very grave questions, which it behoves the Government to consider before they act in this matter. The people of England will certainly consider them and watch their solution in the fulness of time, when they determine whether the conduct of our present rulers has been wise or foolish.

Whenever one argues in favour of the continued occupation of Egypt, one is met by a cry "But the Government pledges. Are the Government to set an example of duplicity? Are they to go to Egypt with certain assurances, and when the time comes to act upon their promises, to ignore the fact that they ever made any?" Now all this assertion is so general, that we do not feel inclined to dispute it. We would rather have the pledges of the Government definitely stated, and see whether there is anything inconsistent with our

continued occupation, in what may have been said upon some other occasion. We believe that when the promises of the Government are put into simple language, it will be found that they do not bind them to withdraw the troops at present, but that they do bind them to continue the occupation of Egypt. The Government has said that the occupation is temporary, that it will not be unnecessarily prolonged, that there will be a prudent development of popular institutions in Egypt, and that there will be such a re-organisation of the State as will secure permanent order. Now it will not be denied that the promise to secure to the population of Egypt permanent order and good government in future, is by far the most important. The question as to how long a "temporary" occupation may last, must depend upon the answer to the question—Is the country in such a condition as to be able to maintain order, and to secure good government? If that is not so, if "temporary" means at the earliest possible moment, whether the country has secured peace and stability or not, then our going there was an absurdity, and our promise a snare. If a revolt, which threatened and would have wrecked the throne of the Khedive eighteen months ago, was a sufficient reason for armed intervention on our part, it would necessarily be an equally good reason for a similar intervention at the present time. But would it be common prudence, if we believe that there may be another outbreak which may necessitate our return to the country with force and arms, to leave it at such a moment? No! The Government promise was that England would remain in Egypt as long as it was necessary to secure a stability of conditions which would render an immediate re-appearance of our troops on that troubled scene unnecessary. There can be no other meaning in the promise than this.

But it may be said, "The time you indicate has

arrived. True, everything is not completed and developed, but that can only be effected in a long course of years. And while it was the intention of England to see Egypt regenerated, it was not our intention to see Egypt grow up. All we desired was, that the condition of the country should be such as to guarantee peace and order. The slow development of national prosperity; the growth of the institutions which we have designed and inaugurated, must be left to the Egyptian people and time." Now of course the question as to whether the time for withdrawal has arrived is one of opinion, and it is one which can be best answered by those who are most familiar with the present condition of Egypt. After making ourselves as intimate with the past history, with the present social and political conditions of the country, and looking as far forward into the future as a knowledge of the past and the present enables us to do, we unhesitatingly say that that time has not arrived, and that the withdrawal of the troops at the present juncture, or in the immediate future, would be a rash, impolitic, and inconsiderate act. We are, however, confirmed in this belief by many persons, far more competent to judge of these intricate matters than we are. Mr. Wallace is a very careful student of race problems, and he, after a very painstaking inquiry, has come to the same conclusion. In his opinion the presence of our troops in Egypt is necessary, because it ensures public tranquillity. Their presence is necessary to accelerate the introduction of the proposed reforms, to secure the services of foreign capital, and he gives weighty reasons for his belief.¹ But it is not so much from his arguments as from the inadvertent signs of a deep-rooted belief, that we are convinced of his conviction. We find, in speaking of Colonel Scott-Moncrieff's work, that he points out that it is certain

¹ Wallace, pp. 380-383.

to fail, unless it is vigorously supported by the British Foreign Office.¹ The more equitable distribution of the Land Tax is a matter which demands immediate attention. But, of course, as the future incidence of the tax will, contrary to its manner in the past, fall upon those who are able to bear it instead of those who are not, there will be great opposition to this, as to the other reforms; for it is just those who are able to bear it who are at the same time able to resist its imposition. The task of redistribution is in the able hands of Mr. Gibson, but here again, Mr. Mackenzie Wallace informs us "that it will be necessary to give him the same kind of extraneous support as his colleague, Colonel Scott-Moncrieff, will so urgently require."² And again, in speaking of the reforms in the judicial system, which were to be made under the learned supervision of Sir Benson Maxwell, he says, "the proposed scheme was nearly finished before his arrival, so that he cannot entirely undo what the Commission, composed of Egyptian jurists, had done; but he may do much to mitigate the evil effects of the above-mentioned tendencies of his colleagues, provided he has the energetic support of the English Government. Whether he will receive the necessary support remains to be seen."³

It would seem, then, that in every department the reforms which are so urgently needed can only be effectuated if England is in earnest in supporting those she has entrusted with the task of inaugurating these improvements. We are not playing with Egypt to mock it with paper constitutions and debating society reforms. We meant to do something which would have the practical results of peace, order, and prosperity. That these will follow, if the schemes so care-

¹ Wallace, p. 481.

² Ibid., pp. 481-482.

³ Ibid., pp. 456-457.

fully framed are wisely carried out, we believe; but that they are to be carried out only with the help of Britain, and that not the distant help of Britain at home, but the intimate assistance of Britain in Egypt, seems to us absolutely certain. The influence of this country, to be effective, must be felt, and the presence of our troops in Egypt is the best, the only guarantee that our wishes will be respected. Arguments with the masters of legions are always more convincing if the legions are at hand. The expedient which some have suggested, that, while withdrawing from Egypt, we should prowl in the neighbourhood at Cyprus, would not effect the objects we have in view. Mr. Mackenzie Wallace shows this, we think, conclusively. We have not the time to follow him through his very careful argument, but we may say that we thoroughly concur with him in thinking that none of the ends we had in view when we went to Egypt will be accomplished, unless we are prepared to have patience in the task we have undertaken. National consciences are not created in a day, and without a conscience the best-framed institutions are but bodies without souls, and in their corruption taint and poison the national atmosphere. If we are to effect anything in Egypt, if our armed visits to that country are not to be repeated from time to time, let us have patience to do the work well now. The people are like clay in strong hands, and very quickly take the shape the modeller desires to give them. But the very plasticity of their nature will make the impressions as transitory in their continuance as they have been easy to impose. To make the populations understand and work the institutions and reforms we have given them is a matter of time. In our own country public conscience is not strong enough to overcome the traditional corruption of election campaigns, and we have to use the force of law where the potency of reason and

conscience fails. Can we expect that the people of Egypt, who have been steeped in corruption for centuries, whose conscience has been cut to shreds by the kurbash, whose institutions, such as they were, have been shattered by rebellion and conquest, can in a few months learn the lesson to be honest, upright citizens, working free institutions under the influence of Britain, who sits in fine separateness in her own island, some thousands of miles away, and who, even if when she retired she had all the intentions of returning in case of another revolution, might find her strong hands tied by circumstances when the revolution came about? No, the presence of latent force is necessary to the reforms we desire, to the peace which we have established, and to the continued order which it is our interest to preserve. We cannot but think that Lord Dufferin holds the same view. We have given some of his words which seem to indicate what he would have advised, had not Her Majesty's Government, and public opinion in England, pronounced against his alternative. We may, however, quote a few more from his general report:—

“At the present moment we are labouring in the interests of the world at large. The desideratum of every one is, an Egypt, peaceful, prosperous, and contented, able to pay its debts, capable of maintaining order along the Canal, and offering no excuse, in the troubled condition of its affairs, for interference from outside. . . . But the administrative system . . . must have time to consolidate in order to resist the disintegrating influences from within and without, and to acquire the use and knowledge of its own capacities. . . . Unless they are convinced that we intend to shield and foster the system we have established, it will be in vain to expect the timid politicians of the East to identify themselves with its existence. . . .

Under these circumstances, I would venture to submit that we can hardly consider the work of re-organisation complete, or the responsibilities imposed upon us by circumstances adequately discharged, until we have seen Egypt shake herself free from the initial embarrassments which I have enumerated. This point of departure once attained, we can bid her God-speed with a clear conscience, and may fairly claim the approbation of Europe for having completed a labour which every one desired to see accomplished, though no one was willing to undertake it but ourselves. Even then the stability of our handiwork will not be assured, unless it is clearly understood by all concerned that no subversive influence will intervene between England and the Egypt which she has re-created."

Remember that the reforms which we are carrying out for the benefit of the population of Egypt, are very much against the grain of the governing classes. All bad systems are for the benefit of some person or persons, and many persons have fattened on the cruelty, the corruption, and the extortion which have had such a vigorous growth upon that feeble mud of character which is known as the Oriental conscience. Their interests are entirely against those of England in this matter. They will have all the wish in the world to return to a system under which they flourished, and it would be no difficult thing to persuade the common people once again, as Arabi did, that it would be to their advantage to turn all foreigners out of the country. The immediate advantages which such an adventurer as Arabi could offer them, would far outweigh the distant gains which would result from free institutions and good government, and in politics, immediate gains weigh far more than large sinking funds. Here then there is a serious danger, which can be guarded against only by habituating the people to

the new *régime* of justice. And that is only to be effected if we have patience to consolidate the work which has been so hastily built. Our last word is that which Sir Evelyn Wood used when he was speaking to the people of this country, and that is, "Patience."

VII

ENGLAND'S SUPREMACY¹

EVERY reader is only too familiar with the sinister name which has been attached to Political Economy. There are certain masters of words who stick indelible badges upon things and systems, and these are, by the force of one man's genius, known by a nickname for ever. Thus, the science of Political Economy has been dubbed "the dismal science," but, to judge from the way in which it is cultivated at the present time, we should imagine that it deserved a very different appellation. There is no subject which in our day seems so inviting to the pens of scribblers. There are no problems which seem so attractive to the moths of thought which flutter round all sources of illumination as those which are connected with the so-called "dismal science." Many books which do not profess to treat of the Cimmerian matters which are dealt with in the pages of Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, Mill, and Fawcett, are still a sort of auxiliaries to these the regular forces, and the work of Mr. Jeans—although he expressly tells us it is not a politico-economical treatise—must be regarded as a work upon certain practical problems which belong to the lugubrious science. We mean no disparagement when we thus describe his treatise, and we may say at once that the book is a useful magazine of important facts, and has been most carefully elaborated and compiled. But

¹ "England's Supremacy: its Sources, Economies, and Dangers," &c. By J. S. Jeans, author of "Steel: its History, Manufactures, and Uses." London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1885.

even now we feel that we have done inadequate justice to Mr. Jeans' careful pages, although we think that the principal value of the work is in conferring "get-at-ability" (to use one of his own words) upon a great number of instructive statistics which are usually only to be found in the fastnesses of Blue-Books, which are rarely explored by arithmetical industry, and making these down into clear and perspicuous prose to suit the comprehension of minds which turn giddy over columns of repellent figures. Still, we should be doing an injustice to the author if we led to the belief that that was all the merit that was to be found in the work. Mr. Jeans is not merely a statistician, or a translator of statistics into words. He has a capacity for drawing sound inferences from the so-called facts of figures. He is by no means a rash man. It is so easy, when one finds that figures count, to make these suit one's preconceived theories, and then one has only to marshal them to make good the proposition which was arrived at without them. But we confess at once that we have found far less of this "hireling chivalry" method of dealing with figures in this book than in most works of a similar scope. Mr. Jeans is, in most instances, a careful and capable guide to sound conclusions.

We regret one thing, and that is that our author should have chosen a catching, but a somewhat inaccurate title. We fully admit the importance of an inquiry into the absolute and relative position of this country, in connection with its agriculture, its commerce, and its industries. It is not only a matter of interest, it is a matter of paramount importance, to those who would wisely conduct the struggle of commerce, which is to result in the survival of the fittest, and who would so conduct the course of legislation as not to interfere with national advance, and on the other hand, further that advance, if such a feat is within

the bounds of wise legislative interference. There can, we should say, be no doubt of the vital importance of this literary endeavour. But that it should have been called by a name which rather reminds one of the sensational title of a shilling thrill, seems to us a matter to be regretted. When Dr. Hutchison Stirling named his learned and difficult exposition of Hegel's "Notion" "The Secret of Hegel," *Punch* not improperly asked if it was a circulating library work. And we confess that the title of this painstaking examination of the statistics of commerce and agriculture in this and other countries has a disappointingly seductive title. There are a great many persons who would fain be persuaded of England's supremacy, and who would avoid pages which indicated that England's supremacy was a thing of the past. Now we suspect that the title chosen was addressed to prejudices of that class. However glad we should be to be convinced of the supremacy of this country, we confess that what we are anxious for in a treatise such as this is not a specious argument for any particular view, but a clear statement of the facts, upon which opinions may be firmly established. Under these circumstances, we regret that a title which gives a colour to the whole of the speculations in the book should have been chosen for the figure-head of pages which seem to us so thoroughly conscientious. Besides, after a careful perusal of the book, we have reluctantly, upon Mr. Jeans' own showing, come to the conclusion that England is no longer supreme. We think that any reader, after a careful study of these pages, which bristle with figures, will be convinced that England does not occupy the position which the title-page of the book would have us believe.

Mr. Jeans manfully sticks to his last, and by most careful analysis and intelligent comparison tries to make out that England does far more than hold her own

against her rivals. But, although he does his very best for his thesis, our impression is that he fails to make out the point. He reminds us of a certain prophet, who was called upon to curse certain enemies of Moab, but who blessed them altogether. He tries hard to resist the conclusion that we are outrun by the United States—the conclusion which was embodied as to a particular aspect of the case in some words of Mr. Gladstone, that “while we have been advancing with this portentous rapidity, America is passing by as if in a canter.” But that conclusion forces itself, if not upon our author, upon his readers. This fact, while it shows, as we think, that the title is not a well-chosen one, is at the same time an indication of the absolute honesty with which the statistical work of this elaborate comparison has been done. But it is not quite a fair thing to make such an allegation against an author without offering some proof of the statement, and we propose to prove this matter out of Mr. Jeans’ own mouth.

He is right when he points out that the comparative superiority of one nation to another is not to be judged of by one or two circumstances in which the one may be luckier than the other, but must be determined in the light of a careful comparison of many facts in the agricultural, the industrial, and the commercial life of the two communities. It is this comparison which is made in the volume before us, and we will quote a few passages taken from pages at various parts of the work which will show that the question of England’s supremacy is not very easily answered in the affirmative.

One circumstance which must militate against a country in the struggle for pre-eminence is the comparative number of persons who are withdrawn from productive occupations to serve in the army and navy. Every man who does not work for himself has to be worked for by others. And the extent of the tax upon

production is to be measured by the cost of the military and naval establishment of a country. Now it cannot be considered a matter for congratulation that "Great Britain appears to have the largest expenditure for military and naval purposes of all European nations excepting only France and Russia, although the strength at her command is less than half that of either of these two countries."¹ But that is a comparatively small matter to be placed on the debtor side of England's account. When we come to examine the question of England's agricultural status (Chap. III.), we find that "it has been the same with other new countries as with the United States. Canada, the Australian continent, Russia and Hungary, the Danubian Principalities, and last, but not least, British India, have gone so largely and so successfully into cereal growing as almost to force the British farmer from the field of operations" (p. 29). This, we should have said, was not a matter for congratulation; but Mr. Jeans does not take the same pessimistic view of this perilous matter, although he seems to admit that the British farmer, in respect of two matters, the smaller use of labour-saving machines and the smaller scale of production upon which agricultural undertakings are conducted, is at a serious disadvantage as compared with his American competitor. But even he seems to think that there is reason for taking a depressed view of our agriculture, for he writes: "Is there then no hope for the future? Must England's agriculturists resign themselves to the supremacy of these distant lands as to an inevitable doom? This, happily, is not the verdict pronounced by those best qualified to gauge the current of events" (p. 49). And again, "The cloud that has so long hung over English agriculture is not therefore without its silver lining." We do not say that it is, but this consolatory consideration, and the fact which Mr. Jeans repeats more than

¹ "England's Supremacy," p. 23.

once,¹ that "England has the most prolific wheat-growing soil in the world," is not pitched in exactly the same jubilant key as the title of the volume in which these plaintive strains are to be found. But the vistas which are opened up by his various chapters are not much brighter than that down which we have just glanced. In his chapter upon England's food supplies we find that "the increased growth of cereals is proceeding at such a rapid pace in the newer countries of the world, and especially in our own colonies and the United States, as to suggest for serious consideration the question whether in course of time we shall not have bread-stuffs supplied at a price that will practically exclude home-grown wheat from English markets" (p. 75), which is in the main a re-statement of the proposition we have already quoted. But to pass from the question of agriculture to that of commerce, are the facts in that regard of a more reassuring nature? Remember, we are only taking Mr. Jeans' own evidence: we are not setting up any case of our own. He rightly dwells upon the increase of our trade with our own colonies, which, no doubt, is one very satisfactory feature of our recent commercial history, but he admits that "it is not pretended for a moment that the figures which illustrate the recent growth of our colonial trade are equally applicable to our commerce with other countries. In some cases, indeed, we have in this latter respect lost ground both absolutely and relatively" (p. 108). And again, on another page, he says: "It is a prevalent but pernicious error to suppose that England's trade with *all* foreign countries is larger in volume and value than that of any other single competing nation. This is very far from being the case. The truth is that Germany does a larger export trade than England with most European countries—with Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and

¹ See pp. 41, 43, and 67.

Belgium. France carries on a greater export trade than we do with Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and a very notable feature of the case is that while these countries have been making headway we have been relatively losing ground" (p. 110). And further: "It behoves the British manufacturer and merchant seriously to consider how, and by what means, other nations have so far succeeded as against English products. What, for example, do the United States receive from France and Germany that England cannot supply, and, above all, what do they receive from those countries in increasing quantities? If we look into the important returns of the United States we shall receive a complete answer to those questions. Those returns show that of the total American imports of merchandise of all kinds, amounting in round figures to a value of 667½ million dollars (in 1884), about 244½ millions worth was received from Great Britain and her dependencies, against 74½ millions worth from France and French possessions, and 65 millions worth from Germany; while it appears, as we have already pointed out, that both France and Germany have been increasing their relative proportions of the whole. But if we further analyse the individual items, we find that France and Germany are not so much competing with England in our staple manufactures as in commodities which England either cannot, or has not yet taken steps to produce" (pp. 111, 112). And once more he sums up the matter thus: "The foregoing facts require to be set off against the enormous growth of our colonial trade to which attention has already been directed, and prove incontestably that England has no monopoly, not even a necessary supremacy, in neutral markets" (p. 114).

In a chapter in which he examines the effect of the use of mechanical appliances and processes upon national prosperity, he says, with truth, that "apart from minor exceptions," some of which he mentions,

"which it would be both impolitic and uncandid to ignore, there is ample reason to believe that England's supremacy in regard to the extent and efficiency of her mechanical aids to production is still unapproached, but it is not therefore unapproachable" (p. 129); but he adds some careful words of warning upon a later page (see p. 136). Again, in his chapter upon the remuneration of labour, we cannot regard these as hopeful words: "Nay, more, America has been able to sell in Canada in competition with English manufacturers commodities that are excluded from her own shores by the prohibitory tariff already referred to. It is in this regard that the warnings of Cassandra are likely to be most necessary and effectual. If the nations that we have been the means very largely of educating up to their present proficiency in manufactures once pre-eminently our own succeed in beating us in neutral markets, our position will be indeed beset with great peril" (p. 160). And in the next page, "'The race is to the swift'—to those who have the energy and the capacity to cultivate the markets of the world, to adopt the best and most modern improvements, and to exercise the utmost economy of management. In these requisites we believe England to remain as hitherto *facile princeps*. But in none of them is she necessarily invulnerable; there is no royal road to commercial supremacy, and the position that England has so nobly won will every year be harder and more difficult to maintain" (p. 161). We may be wrong, but we think that Mr. Jeans himself has such an honest and candid mind, and is so wisely at the mercy of facts and carefully regarded figures, that he has had many "qualms of conscience" in writing this book as to whether England was as supreme as he would have us believe. Facts like those mentioned on page 173, that the "range of wages in Germany is much under that of England," or on page 182, that "in every European country with-

out exception the hours of labour are longer than in our own," a remark which he repeats in another place (see p. 249), must be very significant to such an acute mind as his. He feels the seriousness of that matter when he is speaking of the present and future position of the United States. In that connection he remarks: "It may not be that England is in danger of loss of supremacy from the relatively higher wages which are paid to our artisans, but it will be found, as we proceed, that other countries do not fail to attach much importance to the possession of this cheaper labour and longer hours of work, and that the more costly labour of America is only too vividly reflected in the commercial circumstances of that country" (p. 187), and he adds: "If, as many people seem to suppose, the range of wages paid in the United States should fall without any corresponding movement of wages in England, then it is more than probable that we shall have to accommodate ourselves to a very much keener rivalry in neutral markets on the part of our American competitors. And this is an outlook that has many strong arguments to support it" (p. 187). But it is an outlook that cannot be contemplated without serious apprehensions. America is even at the present time, with the disadvantages of the higher range of wages and her protective tariffs, only too formidable an antagonist for this country. She not only threatens our supremacy, but she holds the industrial sceptre which was once in our hands. We cannot look with complacency on the departure of that sceptre. But it is well worth while to turn from these miscellaneous considerations to look at the facts with regard to one or two of our staple trades as stated by Mr. Jeans. He naturally begins his examination of our various industries with an interesting chapter upon cotton. It is a somewhat curious circumstance that an industry which depends for its raw material upon an article

which is not grown or produced in the country should have flourished here. There are, no doubt, other instances of the same thing, but none in which a trade of the magnitude and importance of our Lancashire cotton trade has been so "acclimatised," if we may use such an expression. That it has flourished is beyond doubt, and the causes of the success with which the cotton industry has been prosecuted are a matter of considerable interest in connection with a history of our commercial progress and position. But the question we are here considering is whether in a department in which this country was long supreme she still retains her supremacy, upon Mr. Jeans' own showing. All that he can say in this connection is that "England has hitherto been able to hold her own in the markets of the world" (p. 190), but at the same time he has to admit "that while the cotton trade of Great Britain has made but little progress during recent years, that of the United States and continental Europe" (and he might, we think, have added Bombay) "has made enormous strides. In the deliveries of raw cotton for consumption between 1873 and 1883 there was an increase of only 1.58 per cent. in Great Britain as against 41.73 in continental Europe, while in the United States the consumption of raw cotton within the same interval has increased by 61.2 per cent." (p. 192). It may be, as he says, that England is still holding her own in the world's markets, but a supremacy held under the circumstances indicated by these statistics is not in a state of very stable equilibrium. But the result of an investigation as to our superiority in the woollen trade is not much more satisfactory. This is what the optimistic author of the title-page "England's Supremacy" himself says :—

"We are now brought face to face with the question of Great Britain's relative progress in the manufacture

of woollen goods. Many cases might be cited in which England has diminished her indigenous supplies of raw materials concurrently with a large increase in the production of the manufactured articles in which these raw materials were employed. That England has largely developed her woollen industry within the last quarter of a century has already been shown by the enormous increase of imported raw wool, and of the exports of manufactured goods produced therefrom. But if we find that other countries have been making even greater progress than our own, this increase of imports and exports will not be altogether so reassuring as we could desire it to be" (pp. 212, 213).

In this case it is not merely a neck-and-neck race between England and the United States, other nations are more than "in the running." Thus we hear that "French woollen operatives are superior to those of England and the United States" (p. 221). That "it will probably strike some as rather a new revelation that inferiority should be attributed to English as against Belgian goods; but there appears to be little doubt that on some points Continental manufacturers have made more headway than their English rivals; and it is at least worth the while of the latter to consider how it happens that fully 65 per cent. of all the yarns spun in Verviers from imported wool is sent to Great Britain" (p. 223). As to the manufacture of silk, which once flourished in this country, there is no attempt to dissemble the fact that the trade has passed and is passing into other hands. The size of our silk factories is greatly diminished (p. 229), and while the "silk manufacture in England has been dwindling and unprosperous, that of the United States has been 'advancing by leaps and bounds'" (p. 230). For once he loses hope and courage in contemplating this decadence, and says: "It is by no means cheering to consider the

remarkable progress of the United States in the light of our own unquestionable loss of ground." While he finds ground for encouragement in the rapid growth and comparative prosperity of the jute trade, which in comparison we think he exaggerates, he admits, with reference to the linen trade, that "the decadence of the growth and manufacture of flax" is discouraging (p. 234).

Naturally in a work of this kind we should expect to find a comparison of the profits which are earned in agriculture and in trade in this and in other countries. But take, for instance, the statement that "the average net result accruing to the American farmer would appear to be much better than that earned by his British compeer, which it is only reasonable to suppose" (p. 239), and it is a little difficult to suck comfort out of it. Our author is pleased to note that English industry is able to command capital at lower rates of interest than have as yet been accepted in any other country, but he adds a significant phrase, "with the exception of Holland" (p. 330). And again, when dealing with national wealth, he remarks that "there is ample reason to conclude that England's manufacturing interests have grown in a measure that have far outstripped the growth of any other modern country"; but then again comes the troublesome exception, "excepting only, as before stated, the American nation" (p. 340). This may, we do not deny, in both these instances be a matter for some satisfaction. It may show that the plight of this country is not so bad as some pessimistic writers have supposed, but we are inquiring upon what ground the claim to England's "supremacy" is based; and, as we said before, we think that in a great number of instances Mr. Jeans makes out that the supremacy is "quite elsewhere." In connection with the question of the employment of women, he rightly points out that there is a strong feeling with many to see women removed from all occupations which have a "tendency, if not to unsex

them, at any rate to diminish their womanly instincts and attributes"; and we agree with him in thinking that the advance in civilisation of a nation may very well be determined in relation to the status and employment of women. But how do we, the "supreme" nation, stand as to this matter? Not well, we gather from the statistics here collected for us. And all that Mr. Jeans has to say is that, "if we have any consolation in this matter at all, it is that, while we are still much worse than the United States, we are better than some other European nations" (p. 349).

In a very well-balanced chapter on our coal supplies, in which he does not exaggerate the dangers which menace the future of industrial England, after a careful summary of the figures, he says: "If we adopt the first of these three rates (rates of consumption) as that which will probably represent the condition of things in the future, it would lead to numbers, not perhaps so startling as those which some former writers on this subject have adopted, but none the less sufficiently remarkable to give us pause in our optimistic view of the future" (p. 362). And, while he is very careful to point out that the coal-bearing area of Great Britain is calculated to be 11,900 square miles while compared with the much smaller areas which are at the mining disposal of France, Germany, Belgium, and Austria, he had to point out that Russia possesses not less than 30,000 square miles of carboniferous land (p. 373), and in another place that the "coal-fields of the United States have been calculated to cover an area of 196,000 square miles" (p. 408). Not much supremacy in this matter, we should say. "The average production of the English coal-miner is *above that of any other in the world*, excepting only those of America" (p. 381). In this statement the italics are his, but we confess that for our purpose the last five words might more appropriately have been italicised. However, even such

consolation as that consideration can give him is not to be a permanent one, for further on he says :—

“Whatever may have been the precise amount and value of the superior efficiency of English labour in the past, there is no doubt that it has been largely due (1) to the superior character and variety of our mechanical appliances ; (2) to the superior training or knowledge of mechanical processes which our artisans were thereby enabled to acquire. These, however, are advantages which may not remain with us. On the contrary, there are continually recurring evidences that our supremacy in this respect is being closely studied and emulated by our rivals abroad ” (pp. 381, 382).

But this matter gets tedious, and we will only point to one or two other instances, out of his own pages, which seem to show that he has taken too sanguine a view when he named his volume. Thus he tells us, “that the technical education of foreign artisans is generally superior to that of our own is undeniable ” (p. 383). “That such part of our pre-eminence as has been due to the better command of labour-saving methods and appliances, to a long course of industrial training, and to a special knowledge of manufacturing processes, is slowly but surely being shared by rival nations, and must ultimately be lost to us ” (p. 391). And again he says that “England has not within recent years excelled, if she has fully kept pace with, the other industrial nations of the world, in reference to such elements of advantage as accrue from production on a large scale ” (p. 398) ; and in comparing the wealth of the two great Anglo-Saxon countries he shows that in 1880 the “United States practically reached the same level of accumulated wealth as the mother country.” He adds, however :—

“Relatively to population, the United Kingdom would still appear to remain the richest country, but how

much longer, if any, can that be so? America has increased her wealth fully tenfold within the forty years under review. England has little more than doubled her wealth in the same interval. Basing our expectations for the future on the analogy of the past, it is evident that as regards wealth England will some day cease to be in the running with her precocious offspring" (p. 418).

We have not dealt at any length with the dangers which menace England, and to which in one place Mr. Jeans alludes (p. 273), or, as yet to the concluding chapter, which he calls "The Achilles Heel of England," which he finds in Ireland, whose "influence in her past has been decidedly sinister and malevolent"; but we have, we think, been able to show other vulnerable spots upon the large bare body of industrial and commercial England; and in doing so we have, we think, put in an important *caveat* against the appropriation by Great Britain of the description with which Mr. Jeans has dubbed her, and at the same time, which has been the main object of this our examination, we have shown what is the scope and purport of this very useful book. It is only fair to add that there is something to be said on the other side of this balance-sheet of the nations. It is seldom that another side is so bad that nothing can be said for it; but in this case we have no wish to throw stones at our mother, or to disparage her eminence in one jot or tittle, and therefore it is fair to point out what Mr. Jeans makes clear, and that is, that no other country in the world has a right to be described as the "world's shipbuilder" (p. 290), and that in the ocean-carrying trade, both sail and steam, England is unquestionably supreme. It is briefly stated as follows in the work before us: "That, while the total earnings of the shipping trade of the world has been calculated at

133 millions sterling, no less than 73 millions, or 55.2 per cent., of this amount has been credited to the United Kingdom, against only 19.6 falling to the United States, 5.4 to France, and about 5.5 to Germany" (p. 292). This is, to our mind, a good illustration of what we should mean by "supremacy." It is right, too, to say that, at the present time, England has a greater chemical and metallurgical trade than any other country in the world, and that in the matter of our great Colonial Empire this country is unique. It is true that the colonies, while they afford what is of paramount importance to producing countries, markets (p. 107), are, as has been pointed out by Sir John Lubbock, occasions of expense (p. 312). They are, too, sources of risk and responsibility, and they, the children of a free-trading mother, have abjured the economical creed of this country, and have adopted tariffs in many ways hostile to the trade of England. But, with all these disadvantages, in this one matter of colonies England is still supreme, and we cannot but think that when England is separated from these great English-speaking peoples the day of England's supremacy will have long passed away, and her place among the nations of the world will be only a little one.

We have thus far endeavoured to make our author tell his own tale, a tale full of statistics and signifying a great deal to this country, for "rightly to be great," we have Shakespeare's authority for saying, "is not to stir without great argument," and it is such patient and careful argument as is set forth in these pages which ought to go before legislative action. There is very little about politics in the book, and, considering its length, there are very few controversial matters raised in it. Upon the question of Free Trade, of course, Mr. Jeans is orthodox, and that is not an unimportant matter in these days, when all sorts of

winds of doctrine are blowing about the polling booths, and when a good many electoral issues turn upon such catching sophisms as lie under the expression Fair Trade and the like. He adds nothing, however, to the argument in favour of Free Trade, although he states the case with clearness and comprehension. Upon the question of peasant proprietors, we should like to question him a little more closely. At the present time there is a good deal of loose opinion in favour of a system which would have the effect of stopping the depopulation of the country districts, and turn the tide of immigration back from the towns into rural places. There is a good deal of atavism in our opinions, and we find professed Socialists looking back to a golden age before industrialism was, with a longing desire to reinstate men in the position they were in under the feudal system. But even those who stop short of condemnation of the industrial dispensation, and who are not prepared to condemn labour-saving machines as an injury to the working classes of this and other countries, seem to regret the passing away of the days when the country was more attractive to labourers than the towns; they deplore the tendency which is only too evident in our shifting populations to pass out of the agricultural and into the artisan classes of the community, and they find a remedy for those evils in the institution of a system of peasant proprietary. Their views have the sanction of very great names. M'Culloch and Sismondi have expressed opinions which run parallel with Arthur Young's well-known and often-quoted axiom, "Give a man secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden; give him a nine years' lease of a garden, and he will convert it into a desert." Mill, in his "Political Economy," conceives it to be established that there is "no necessary connection between peasant properties and an imperfect state of the arts of production"; that

they are "favourable in quite as many respects as they are unfavourable to the most effective use of the powers of the soil; that no other existing state of agricultural economy has so beneficial an effect on the industry, the intelligence, the frugality, and prudence of the population, nor tends on the whole so much to discourage an improvident increase in their numbers, and that no existing state is therefore on the whole so favourable, both to their moral and their physical welfare." Professor Fawcett was more guarded in his admiration of the system, but he thought that whatever advantages can be attributed to it are "almost entirely due to the fact that the cultivator owns the soil which he tills," that "great social advantages are derived from peasant proprietorship," but that the economical advantages are by no means so obvious, even though "authorities seem unanimously to agree upon the great industry evinced by this class, who differ herein essentially from tenant farmers." Seeing that these views are somewhat widely diffused throughout politicians, it is not to be wondered at that the application of this principle to landholding has been preached as a panacea, not only for the ills of this country, but for the chronic discontent of Ireland. In 1885, a Bill, entitled "The Yeoman and Small Holdings Act," was introduced into Parliament, with the object of facilitating the acquisition of land by occupiers in England and Wales. And only the other day Mr. Chamberlain, in his speech on the Address on the 26th of August, said:—

"I will say this, that in public, as well as in private, I have always been in favour of a large scheme of land purchase. Why did I object to the principle of the Land Purchase Bill of the late Prime Minister? I have always felt that at the bottom of this Irish question is the land agitation, and that you must settle the

agrarian question first, and that dual ownership would have to be abolished, and that a peasant proprietary should be established in Ireland in the same way that it has been done in Germany, Russia, and Bavaria, and in other countries. This can be done either by a vast confiscation of property, which is not advocated by a single member, or under a great system of State-aided purchase. I have never denied that I have always been in favour of it, but I thought that the scheme of the late Prime Minister involved a risk so tremendous that there would be a loss to the taxpayers."

Under these circumstances we must regard Mr. Jeans' careful inquiry into this matter as opportune. There are a good many axioms like that of Arthur Young, or opinions like those of M'Culloch and Mill, especially when reiterated by living and active politicians, which go about the world of men's minds, deceiving people, and it is well when one of these impostors is brought to book and carefully tried in the light of fuller experience. The views which were expressed in favour of peasant proprietorship by the writers mentioned were founded mainly on theoretical considerations. However wise a man is he is a fool in comparison with the results of practical experiment, and Mr. Jeans has very carefully inquired into this matter in its various aspects as presented in Germany, India, Burmah, China, Japan, and Italy, and has come to the conclusion that England would be benefited by a continuance of her present system of land distribution, and would not be benefited by a general system of peasant proprietary (p. 67). He says: "Other countries may afford to disregard small economies, and may tolerate a system which requires that three men shall only furnish the labour of one. England cannot do this. Economy of labour is the very

breath of her nostrils, *such economy is incompatible with a large system of peasant proprietary*; therefore, it is fair to conclude that peasant proprietorships are not suited to England." We do not wish to decide this weighty matter between such advocates. But we must say that much that Mr. Jeans writes upon this subject is exceedingly cogent, and ought to make rash advocates of the system pause before they fill the sails of change with any more of the wind of their arguments. We suspect this gardening legislation, which is to cultivate men into prudent and wise and useful citizens, and we have every reason to place confidence in the system which has allowed men to develop in their own way under the free play of untampered-with economical laws. Our leaning then, notwithstanding the authorities against it, is with Mr. Jeans and his careful facts, and we can recommend this chapter to the painstaking reading of politicians.

There are other matters that we should have expected to meet with in this examination of England's position amongst the nations. Mr. Jeans has a chapter upon the taxation of this and other countries, and points out truly enough that, while the United States has shaken off most of its enormous war debt, in the way that a duck disposes of rain-drops, England is getting rid of her debt at a rate which, if continued, would dispose of the whole great burden in 500 years.

We may add, too, that we half expected to see the question of national debts treated at greater length. It is not only unsatisfactory that we are so slowly diminishing our own, but it is, we think, a matter for some regret that our great colonies are so rapidly increasing theirs. We do not say, as Mr. Froude in "Oceana" hints, at any rate in the case of one colony, that they are taking upon themselves burdens greater than they can bear, but they are, we imagine, taking

upon themselves burdens which will handicap them in the great race of the nations. We notice that in many cases the money borrowed by the colonies has been admirably spent in developing railways and other works, which have tended and will tend to increase the wealth of the colonies. But there is a limit to the successful speculations of even a giant colony, and it is very hard for the people of a country to find out exactly when that limit has been reached. We confess that the ease with which our colonies borrow money, and the readiness with which they have been taking advantage of these financial opportunities, is a matter which we cannot regard with unmixed satisfaction. The same thing may be said of the way in which our own municipal corporations have been borrowing in recent times. There again the excuse is that the money has been well spent, first in providing the communities with water, and then with gas, and tramways, and so on. It has too often been said that these speculations of various corporations have been paying ones. Many corporations, like Manchester and Birmingham, have been making large profits out of the sale of gas, and these profits, having been carried to the credit of their borough funds, have gone to the relief of the ratepayers. But that state of things, which may have been satisfactory to the ratepayers, cannot have been altogether agreeable to the consumer of gas who did not contribute to the rates of the town, and that happy condition of things, if not quite over, is certainly threatened. This year the town of Oldham, which had been making £10,000 a year net profit out of its gas, and much of its gas was sold to persons residing outside the municipal limits, came to Parliament for an Act to enable it to purchase certain land and to raise certain additional capital. The Bill was contested by the outside districts, and in the results the profits of the Corporation of Oldham were cut

down to a minimum. But the discussion of this very important matter is outside our present purpose, and it is not dealt with in Mr. Jeans' book.

No doubt the question of the comparative taxation of the people of various nations is a most important one to consider in relation to the prosperity of those nations; but there are other matters connected with legislation, besides taxes and tariffs, which may affect the prosperity and position of a country. The future of a country can be foretold only in relation to political tendencies which may and do materially affect agricultural, commercial, and industrial conditions, and we question whether this aspect of the question has been sufficiently present to the author's mind during the compilation of his work. His book, as will be gathered from what has been said of it, is in the main statistical, and in that connection, as placing within the reach of all, numerical statements which it would take much time and trouble to extract from the original documents, the work will be of signal service. But there are other larger issues which we expected to see touched upon. What influence has the spread of democracy upon the commercial prosperity of a country? Are the hostile tariffs of the United States and our Australian Colonies due to the popular governments which they have enjoyed? Is State interference with the various industries of a country beneficial or disadvantageous to the country in its competition with its neighbours? What can a willing Government like the present one do to develop the resources and improve the commercial and industrial condition of a poverty-stricken and discontented country like Ireland? Within what limits may a Parliament interfere with the liberty of the subject by Factory Acts, Eight Hours Acts, Employers' Liability Acts, and the like, without impairing the prosperity of the country? Should the means of transportation be transferred from private hands to the hands of the State?

And a great many other questions of a like nature we might have expected to see dealt with in such a book as this. No doubt these matters would have introduced a speculative element which is absent from its pages—which stand comparatively firm on well-authenticated statistics. And we have, perhaps, no right to complain of an author not having done what he never proposed to attempt. There are, however, a few matters in which a little more care might have been given to details. Thus, we find a good deal of unnecessary repetition, which may to some extent be due to the plan of the book, but which might, we think, have been avoided. To illustrate what we mean, we may mention that the interesting fact that the average “individual wealth of the people of our Australian Colonies is greater than that of any other people on the face of the earth,” is mentioned on page 3, and is repeated on page 337. The fact that the soil of England is the most prolific wheat-growing soil in the world appears as a statement on page 41, on page 43, and again, in a slightly modified form, on page 67. Certain words from Quesnay are quoted on page 25, and again on page 394. In speaking of Italy, in connection with peasant proprietary, he quotes the following : “They,” the labourers, “will walk forty or fifty miles with a view to engage in the lowest and foulest work, such as rice cleaning, in order to gain thirty francs by forty days’ labour in the heat of summer, provided only with the bread which they can carry or procure in the neighbourhood” (see page 65), and the same statement, word for word, appears again in another place (p. 93). The warnings of Cassandra are spoken of, we suspect without an accurate memory of the mythological story, on page 160, and again on page 290. There are other repetitions, which it is not worth while mentioning, on page 408, of a statement made for the first time on page 373, on page 405 of a statement on page 403, on page 417 of a statement

made on page 411, and on page 385 of a statement made on page 187. Then, while we are fault-finding, may we not point to a table on page 16, where the figures which are under the heading "Agriculture" ought to be under the heading "Manufactures, &c.," and *vice versa*. Again, in the table printed on page 42, surely the words "surplus" and "deficiency" are put at the heads of the inappropriate columns. If not, then the statement with regard to Germany on page 58, and the statement as to the quantity of corn grown in the United Kingdom on page 75, must be erroneous. There are, too, some minor errors. "New York" seems to be printed by mistake for "Liverpool" on page 80; "exports" for "imports," and "imports" for "exports," on page 101, as is shown by page 102. The words "per week" in the table on page 152 must, we think, be an error. The phrase, "the improvements in the locomotive engine have *induced the command*," &c., is scarcely happy. "Great" is printed for "greater" on page 297. And the statement made on page 303, that "if the whole of the British Empire were populated as thickly as England and Wales, the total number owing allegiance to the British Crown would be not 300 millions, as at present, but 3563 millions, or more than thirty-five times as many," does not seem to be arithmetically accurate. Then again, there is incompatibility between the statements as to the total property and profits assessed under the Income Tax Schedules on pages 318 and 321. But we have picked holes enough, and it is only fair to say that, on the whole, the work is carefully and well executed.

No book dealing with the important economic problems of our time could disregard the relations between this country and Ireland. As we have already said, Mr. Jeans has a chapter entitled "The Achilles Heel of England" in his book, in which he says, "There is no more vulnerable part of the British Empire than

Ireland," and in which he alludes to the influence which that sister country has exerted upon the British Empire as "decidedly sinister and malevolent" (p. 420). It is undoubtedly true that Ireland has all along been a source of trouble and anxiety to this country. When England was "at bay" against all the nations of Europe, in the end of the last century, Ireland carried on regular communications with the French Directory. Then and now Ireland has regarded England's peril as her opportunity; and even in times of peace Ireland is a thorn in the side of the United Kingdom. Her history is not a pleasant one to read. From the earliest time her people have had a contempt of order and authority, and a strange clinging to the uncivilised course of rapine and murder. Here is an old but significant fact; of the one hundred and seventy-eight monarchs of the Milesian colony who successively ruled the country until the arrival of the English A.D. 1170, "sixty were treacherously murdered, and succeeded by their assassins, while seventy-one more were slain in battle, so that only twenty died natural deaths" (p. 420). "During this period no man could enjoy his life, wife, lands, or goods in safety, if a mightier man than himself had an appetite for them, and the weak had no remedy against the strong."¹ It has been a nation of "stirt and strife," to use the old Scotch phrase. Prosperity has avoided her shores, as she generally does those that are stained with much blood. Industry has made but two small settlements within her borders, and those are significantly in Ulster. She has walked for years along the brink of starvation, and has aggravated her position by disaffection, by violence, by crime, and by revolution. It is all very well to talk of the misgovernment of the past. During this century the government of Ireland has been on the whole wise and temperate. The list of measures which

¹ Martin's "Ireland Before and After the Union."

have been passed for the benefit of Ireland is a long and almost a complete one (see p. 425). But what is the result of all this legislative attention? Has Ireland become tractable? Now that justice has been done her, is she contented? The history of the last five years, of to-day, is a ghastly negative. Now, however, it is said that the cure for all these evils, the means of pacifying our "incompatible" companion, the method of securing peace and prosperity for that distracted country, is the conferring upon her the right to make her own laws. The history of the years when Ireland had a Parliament are instructive reading in connection with the legislative proposals which have been before this country during the year 1886. But it is not with these that we have to do in this place at the present time. We would rather endeavour to see if anything is to be hoped for from the inquiries which are to be instituted by the Government. Can anything be done to develop the resources of Ireland? One or two words are worth saying on what has been called the causes of the incurable poverty and consequent discontent of Ireland. First, it has been said that the population is too dense for the cultivable area. Well, however true that may have been, the matter now wears a different complexion. Ireland is, as Mrs. Beecher Stowe said of New England, "an excellent country to emigrate from," and the population of the Emerald Isle has been greatly diminished, and is still diminishing. Between 1800 and 1841, the population of Ireland doubled. In 1841 the population was in the ratio of 251 to the square mile of area; but at the present time there is only an average of 160 inhabitants to the same area. It is calculated that between 1845 and 1881, as many as two and three-quarter millions of the inhabitants of Ireland emigrated.

Then it is said that the soil of Ireland is poor, and that only two-thirds of it are arable. Well, what is

arable is very good land. From official returns we are able to say that on the average of the ten years ending 1883 the mean yield of the principal crops per acre was considerably higher than those of other countries in Europe, England and Wales excepted. It is true that Ireland has more than its share of bog lands. In 1809 it was calculated that the area of the principal bog land was nearly three million acres. But then, against that damaging fact, it is to be remembered that the elevation of these lands is such that they could be easily drained into contiguous lakes or rivers, and so into the sea. But it is not so much physical disadvantages that Ireland suffers from. It has been long recognised that there is in the people an absence of habits of industry and a disinclination to the continued exertion of regular employment. It has indeed been calculated that the average Irishman does not work more than two hundred days in the year. They are, too, disinclined to adopt improvements, which places them at a serious disadvantage in the "struggle for existence," and they imprudently marry early. To crown all, they are so unsettled and demoralised by political agitators, by social wars, by land leagues, and the like, that even if other things were in favour of the race, it would have a difficulty in wooing that fickle goddess—prosperity.

Now, what is to be done under this state of circumstances? If only Ireland has rest it might survive as a nation, might even prosper. But you might as well advise a fever patient to be quiet and have calm blood. If only capital was encouraged to go into the country, these bogs might be drained, the mineral resources of the country might be developed; railways and canals, which have not been developed to anything like the same extent in Ireland, relatively either to area or population, that they have been in this country, might be constructed. Industries might take root in the country, which is at present far too exclusively dependent on

agriculture, and that, too, the production of one particular tuber. All this might easily happen, and with the prosperity we have been forecasting would come contentment which has been so long a stranger to the island—if only capital was encouraged to go there! But will it? You might as well invite the lamb to lie down with the lion in this ante-millennial time, as to ask capital to go to Ireland. It is possible that the Government may find a means of forcing some English capital into the country, but there is a very strong feeling amongst a certain class of politicians against taxing the British taxpayer for the benefit either of Irish landlords or of Irish tenants. Still, it is possible that the country might sanction the guaranteeing of a loan with a view to the development of Irish resources, if there was a fair prospect that the money lent would have the effect of producing prosperity and peace to our unhappy neighbour. But would that have the desired effect? We must say that we think capital does the most good where it goes the most readily. When capital has to be forced into a certain channel, we doubt whether it is likely to be so beneficial as when it makes a channel for itself; still the experiment is worth trying, although we must not forget that it has been tried before, and that of itself tends to make us less sanguine of the result. Mr. Jeans, in his chapter on Ireland, has not prophesied, but has contented himself with pointing out some of the facts of the situation, and does not prescribe a remedy. Perhaps, after all, that is the safer course. The look into the future of Ireland is black enough, and he who looks into it can only see an inverted image of the haggard past.

With reference to Mr. Jeans' book we have, we think, done enough to show that it will well repay a careful perusal, and even a lengthened study.

VIII

GORDON'S JOURNALS¹

LORD HARTINGTON, in speaking on August 29 at Rossendale, in Lancashire, made a sort of defence of the late Government with reference to its somewhat curious Egyptian policy. His otherwise admirable speech was not very convincing in that connection. He said :—

“I don't say that there may not have been faults and mistakes committed, but I say that on the whole the direction, the aim, and the object of our policy in Egypt *has been right*, and that so far as it was possible to judge what the policy of our opponents was from their speeches and from their letters—as far as we can judge, I say—their policy appears to have been wrong. The system which we found in Egypt, and which broke to pieces in our hands, was not a system of our own creation (hear, hear). We went to Egypt because we had engagements which we thought we were bound to fulfil, and because we had an interest—and we thought that our Indian possessions and our colonies had an interest—that anarchy should not prevail in that country.”

He then went on to compare that policy with the supposed policy of the opponents of the late Government, and concluded to his own satisfaction that we

¹ “The Journals of Major-Gen. C. G. Gordon, C.B., at Khartoum.” Printed from the Original MSS. Introduction and Notes by A. Egmont Hake, author of “The Story of Chinese Gordon,” &c. London. 1885.

were better off to-day from having followed the policy of the late Government "in spite of its failures," and "notwithstanding the faults and errors which might have been made in its course, than we would have been if power had been in the hands of the Conservatives."¹ Well, we are not seriously concerned to discuss this question. It seems to us one of the smallest of satisfactions to feel that some other body might have done worse for us than the person we are complaining of ; and it is rather "throwing up the sponge," to use a phrase which the present Secretary of State for India has made Parliamentary, to conduct a defence by showing that a crime charged might have been committed by another person in the same position, or that even a more atrocious crime might have been committed. A more pertinent inquiry for us, and, we should have thought, too, for the electors of the North-east Division of Lancashire, is whether the late Government formed a right conception of their true policy in connection with Egypt, and whether they carried out that policy with the sense and honesty which the country had a right to expect of them. We confess that we do not think, from our recent experiences, that it is right to argue from what a party has said when in opposition to what would have been its policy had it been in power, and we find it difficult to believe that any official persons could have made a more miserable fiasco in connection with Egyptian affairs than Lord Hartington's clients. Let us say here, however, that we do not think that the last sentence which we quoted from Lord Hartington's speech embodies an erroneous statement. We agree with him that this country had substantial interests in Egypt—that our Indian possessions and our colonies too had interests in Egypt, and one of the paramount interests was that "anarchy should not

¹ Mr. Gladstone in his Manifesto goes even further than Lord Hartington in admitting errors of judgment. His defence, however, is not more conclusive.

prevail in that country." We have already, in these pages, discussed the earlier phases of the political conduct of this country in Egypt, and it is not necessary to go back upon the embroiled questions which were presented after the theatrical overthrow of Arabi. We made a good deal too much of that easy victory, and took too little account of the duties and responsibilities which that military "walk over" left on our hands. In another essay in this volume, we pointed out that in having taken active measures to prevent anarchy in Egypt, we had put our hand to a very awkward plough, and that however much we might desire to turn back and withdraw our troops, and pursue the masterly policy of what General Gordon in these Journals calls "ratting out," or what the newspapers have called the "policy of scuttle," that such a course was not competent to us, if we had any regard to our real duties and our real interests in Egypt. We ventured then to point out that our duty was not done when we had protected Egypt from the anarchy which might have resulted from the small revolt of the captains, but that we must protect that country against the much greater evils which would result from the aggression of the Mahdi. When that article on Egypt was written, the revolt in the Soudan was a comparatively small matter. Up to that time the Mahdi had defeated some small detachments of troops, far inferior in numbers to his own, but shortly before the article was printed he had annihilated Hicks Pasha's army, and had extended his influence and power in the Soudan to an extraordinary extent. It was then we warned the Government that their work in Egypt was only beginning. We had suffered the fellaheen conscripts to be dragged in chains from their homes to swell the tattered ranks of General Hicks' army, at a time when we were paramount in Egypt, and when we were pretending that we were keeping faith with the European Powers by not

establishing a protectorate. Then "take"—to quote from these Journals of General Gordon :—

"Take the Tokar business : had Baker been supported by, say, 500 men, he would not have been defeated ; yet after he was defeated you go and send a force to relieve the town. Had Baker been supported by these 500 men he would, in all probability, have been victorious, and would have pushed on to Berber, and, once there, Berber would not have fallen. What was right to do in *March* was right to do in February. We sent an expedition in March ; so we ought to have sent it in February ; and thus the worst of it was that Baker having been defeated, *when you did send your expedition to Tokar*, Baker's force no longer existed, and his guns resist me at Berber.¹

It was in this way that we culpably suffered the head and front of the rebellion in the Soudan to become really menacing to Lower Egypt. And the shilly-shally of our earlier policy left us no free will in our latter conduct. It was under these circumstances that we pointed out that our duties in Egypt were increasing. We had saved the country from what we said would lead to anarchy, although there might have been differences of opinion as to that ; and now we have been the means of raising a revolt in the Soudan in comparison with which Arabi's conspiracy was only child's-play. That this was the doing of the late Government of England people are apt to forget ; but the fact is indubitable. It is worth while noting in this place that our Government ought to have known the unstable state of the equilibrium of the forces which produce peace in the Soudan. They had at any rate the means of knowledge. If General Gordon was the right man to send to Khar-

¹ Vol. i. p. 162.

toum in January 1884 to report to the Government, his opinions upon the state of affairs in the Soudan were worth listening to. General Gordon had seen the storm-cloud from afar. In 1876, when he had determined to resign the office of Governor of the Equator, which he held under the Egyptian Government, he wrote: "Things have come to such a pass in these Mussulman countries that a crisis must come about soon." When he left the country, after having ruled over the Soudan for three years, in April 1879, he said, "If the liberation of the slaves takes place in 1884, and if the present system of Government goes on, there cannot fail to be a revolt of the whole country."¹ It was therefore not without warning that the Government put its head into a noose and drew the cord tighter and tighter by every one of its silly struggles. From this point, however, the policy of the Government was as hand to mouth as ever. When they saw that the task of holding the Soudan was a difficult one, they determined that Egypt should abandon it, and because the Egyptian Ministers of that time did not view the matter in the same light there was a Ministerial crisis. This was a somewhat strong measure for England to take. It was in Egypt to protect its own interests in the water communication between this country and its Indian possessions, and because it had become more mixed up with Egyptian affairs than the extreme wing of the Radical party liked, it determined to simplify the problem by making Egypt abandon its most important province. And to make this step practicable, the Government of the time was dismissed by England's puppet, the Khedive, and a more pliable Ministry took its place. This, again, was the way in which our late Govern-

¹ See also, in confirmation of these views, the note on "The Insurrection of the False Prophet, 1881-83," in the appendices to these volumes, pp. 456-458.

ment carried out its promises to Europe—that they had no thought of annexation or of establishing a protectorate. They did not seem to see that this action upon their part was another wriggle which made the noose more secure. They were becoming more and more deeply pledged to the poor country which they had helped into its miserable plight, to protect it against external and internal foes, and it became more and more imperative that “anarchy should not prevail in that country.” But one thing even our Government, knocking about as it was from pillar to post in diplomacy, could not propose. It was easy to say you must give up the Soudan, because the Soudan has washed its hands (in blood) of you; but it could not well say, You must leave all the garrisons you have placed there to their fate. It ultimately came very much to that, but such cold-blooded news had to be broken to the country. At that time, however, the policy was to “rescue and retire.” How to get them out was no doubt a difficult question. But the rule in Government is, “when in doubt” have somebody to make a report to you. And consequently the late Government, on the suggestion, it is said, of one of the daily newspapers, appointed General Gordon to report “on the military situation in the Soudan, and on the measures which it might be deemed advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding positions in that country, and for the safety of the European population in Khartoum, and further upon the manner in which the safety and good administration of the Egyptian Government of the ports on the sea-coast could be best secured.”

There is no question that in selecting General Gordon for that office they had hit upon the right man. Very few such men as Charles Gordon are produced in a generation. These times are prolific only of what

the Americans call "no account men." But Gordon was a man of undoubted genius, and possessed, what was more regarded in earlier times than it is in our days, an unbounded influence over the men with whom he was brought into contact. A powerful magnet brings all other magnets within its sphere into relation with itself, and there are some personalities which have a similar power in relation to their fellow-men. Gordon was made to command and influence others; he was brave to a fault; he was as honest as the day; he was as strict a disciplinarian as a frost, and yet he was tender and gentle as a woman. He had, too, a deep religious sentiment without which no man will succeed in largely influencing masses of men. This is not the place to speak of his achievements in China, indeed "achievements" almost seems too cold a word to apply to the miracles he performed in that country. Prudent peddling persons who were associated with him at that time thought Gordon was "mad." It was only because there was no common measure by which they could judge of him; and the epithet "mad" is the compliment which all the foolish are always applying to the really great ones of the earth. We should have thought less of Gordon, if some commonplace persons had not accused him of insanity or of "having a devil." Here, however, we have rather to do with those doings which justified his being called "Soudan Gordon" instead of "Chinese Gordon," as he had been called in the past; for it was his unparalleled knowledge of the Soudan, the immense influence he had acquired in that country, which made his selection by the Government to report an act of wisdom. That in this they did wisely we do not doubt. That his appointment would have resulted in the happiest issues we firmly believe, had not the Government distrusted the man they had selected, had they not thwarted him and obstructed

him at every turn. Of that phase of their policy we must say something hereafter. Here, however, we want to show why Gordon was the right man in the right place when he was appointed to report on Soudan matters to the late Government. A very brief sketch will establish that point.

In the year 1874 Gordon was appointed by the Khedive Governor of the Equator. He accepted the perilous office with one object in view, and that was to benefit the people over whom he was set in authority, and he believed that that was to be done by giving freedom to all. No man who was not possessed of the highest aims, the most indomitable courage, and of the very largest personal resources, would have undertaken such a task at such a time. The condition of the country over which he was to rule—which he was to attempt to regenerate—was terrible. It was the happy hunting-ground of the slave-dealer, whose inhuman trade was winked at and encouraged at Cairo.¹ Seven-eighths of the population of the Soudan were slaves. Parents would sell their children for cattle. The people were ashamed of nothing, but they were afraid of everything. No man sowed because there was no security that he would reap what he had sown. Safety of travel through those savage lands was secured only to companies composed of not less than 100 persons. Laws were never heard of, unless the motto that “plunder is no offence,” which the Pashas had inculcated and illustrated, was a law. This system of barbarism existed not in spite of the Governors and Vakeels, or what not, but by means of their active connivance and under their “direct patronage.” Out of this system they made their gains. It was over this crawling pest of humanity that Gordon was made ruler; it was through these polluted channels that he had to try to administer justice to the

¹ Wars were frequently fomented between rival chiefs upon the tattered verge of civilisation for the purposes of supplying the slave markets.

people. A hopeless task it would have seemed to most men to get order out of this human chaos. But Gordon set himself at once to do two things—to put an end to the contraband of human flesh, and to gain the confidence of the people. He ventured alone and unarmed into the midst of those whose nefarious trade in human bodies, and in truth in human souls, he had come to abolish. He demonstrated at once even to these people that he was a man of consummate bravery, and the savage can understand courage if he can understand nothing else. But he was no mere bravo, carrying his life in his hand. He set himself to introduce the comely acts of peace. He made the sowing of grain safe. He supplied the temporary wants of those who had nothing to live upon. He gave work to those who were idle, and he taught the people the use of money. But this was not enough. The slow results which followed these labours did not satisfy him, for he felt that he was rolling a stone up a hill. All his plans were met with organised obstruction. No one knows what obstruction can do until he has tried to inaugurate reform in Oriental peoples. From the highest, such as Ismail Pasha Yacoub, the Governor-General of the Soudan, down to the lowest Vakeel or Sandjac, he found that his plans for the deliverance of the people, for the establishment of a stable and just government, were counteracted, retarded and obstructed by those whose real duty it was to further his designs. He felt, too, that unless he was to remain permanently, or unless his own maxims and rules were to be acted upon by his successors, he might really be doing harm to those he was seeking to benefit. It is only too evident that if a man becomes a man of peace before the laws are strong enough to put an end to that class of men who live by war and plunder, he is only making himself an easier and more tempting victim to the robber and the spoiler. This pressed upon Gordon; it was because he saw

no way to ensure a permanence of good rule in the Soudan that he resigned his position as Governor of the Equator in 1876.

But his task was not by any means done. He was immediately afterwards appointed Governor-General of the Soudan. The obstructive Ismail Pasha Yacoub was removed, and Gordon ruled with almost supreme power over a country 1600 miles long by 700 miles wide. He had set himself to put down slavery, but he knew unless that was associated with the establishment of a proper system of government, the result would be a revolt and rebellion, and as one of the first steps in the direction of good government, he set himself to improve the communications. Gordon was no mere philanthropic visionary, but a very practical man. He knew that the mere suppression of the slave trade was not enough. The slave trade he recognised as a kind of savage government. If he was to do away with that he must have some more humane institution to put in its cruel place. And he set himself to solve this difficult practical problem with a will. There were sights and sounds enough to shock a man of even ordinary humanity, and Gordon had an exceedingly tender heart. He saw that the people were being goaded to revolt. He saw the lands which would, to use the American expression, have "laughed in the harvest, if they had been tickled with the hoe," were lying waste, that thousands of human bones were bleaching in the sun, where slaves had dropped out of the labouring caravans, and had died where they had fallen, while the vultures scarcely waited for their prey. It is difficult, even when one writes about such matters, to keep one's blood temperate. But one can well understand how such things as these made his hot blood boil. He saw, too, that it was Zubair who was the moving spirit in this infernal plot against humanity, and that it was necessary to put an end at once to his terrible influence.

Zubair was safe in so-called captivity in Cairo ; but Suleiman his son could be, and was, crushed. The history of this, too, savours, as so much of Gordon's history does, of the miraculous. Had his work, so well begun, been honestly continued, much might have been effected for these miserable populations, and much that has since shocked the sense and the humanity of Europe, might have been prevented. Gordon ruled as Governor-General of the Soudan for three years, and in that time he had succeeded in much. He had disbanded the Bashi-Bazouks ; he had got rid of the Mudirs and Pashas who had sought only to promote their own interests without regarding the interests of the suffering people ; and he had succeeded in endearing himself to the people of the country, who rightly recognised in Gordon a friend and a would-be saviour. He left at the end of his short and salutary reign because the whole of the affairs at Cairo had put on a changed complexion. Tewfik was in Ismail's place. The Dual Control was gone. The influence of the Pashas was again felt at the capital, and the new ruler was in favour of oppression, of baksheesh, of the courbash, and all other machinery of tyranny. Under the circumstances he could not remain. He left, but he left behind him a great mark in the grateful remembrance of the poor distracted people he had befriended.

Under these circumstances there can be no question that the late Government did well, in the foolish trouble they were in, to look to Gordon for help. But they looked to entirely the wrong quarter if they expected in Gordon to find a facile tool in the hands of their vacillation and indecision. This, however, is really what they seemed to think they had found. Just let us see, with the assistance of the careful editor of these Journals, what the late Government asked Gordon to do, and what they afterwards expected of him.

As we have seen, they appointed General Gordon to

report to them. Domestic questions, when they become troublesome, are placed on a shelf, which is sometimes called a Select Committee and sometimes a Royal Commission. In foreign affairs, when they get knotted, a Special Commissioner is appointed to report upon the situation, and to advise as to the means of unravelling the tangled skein of affairs.¹ But the instructions to General Gordon went further, as Mr. Egmont Hake properly points out. This clause was in his instructions: "You will consider yourself authorised and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian Government may desire to entrust to you, and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring." No sooner was Gordon in Egypt than the Egyptian Government appointed him Governor-General of the Soudan, the country they had under England's instructions abandoned, and his instructions were now no longer to report but "to evacuate the Soudan." The Firman contained this amongst other things: "We do hereby appoint you Governor-General of the Soudan, and we trust that you will carry out our good intentions for the establishment of justice and order, and that you will assure the peace and prosperity of the people of the Soudan by maintaining the security of the roads open," &c.² It was in attempting to carry out this great duty and humane and noble task that Gordon spent eleven miserable months in Khartoum. That they were sad times may in part be gathered from these Journals of some of his last months.³ He was surrounded by treachery, plotted against by all, unsupported, nay, worse, thwarted and brow-beaten by the

¹ The number of Special Commissioners which have reported upon Egyptian affairs is a fair measure of the helplessness of our Government. Of course nothing or next to nothing has come of any of their Reports.

² Vol. i. Introduction, p. xxix.

³ It is scarcely worth while to prove this by quotations, but here are some words, written on December 6, which bear it out: "To-morrow it will be 270 days—nine months—that we have endured one continuous misery and anxiety."—*Journals*, vol. ii. p. 385.

Government which had sent him. He was even insulted by being told to imitate the Government which had accredited him, which had scuttled out of every position—he was advised to scuttle too. But that was not only physically out of the question, it was morally impossible to a man with Gordon's conscience. It was then that the Government made a mistake. But not only were the times "most bad," there was "no hope of better to be had." Gordon often had glimpses of prophecy. He had, too, perspicuous glances of what the end would be. Could anything by anticipation more correctly describe events than this sentence of his written beforehand: "It is of course on the cards that Khartoum is taken under the nose of the expeditionary force, which will be just too late."¹ Or than these, almost his last written words, dated December 14, 1884: "Now, mark this, if the expeditionary force, and I ask no more than two hundred men, does not come in ten days, the town may fall: and I have done my best for the honour of my country. Good-bye."² At the end of these eleven months he died, and we may say of him, as he said of Stewart and Power, that he was "as much a martyr as Peter or Paul."³

But even these instructions to which we have referred, explicit enough as they seem, were not all that he received. Upon January 26, 1884, the Khedive wrote to him that "the object of his mission to the Soudan was to carry into execution the evacuation of those territories and to withdraw the troops." "We trust," the Khedive continued, "that your Excellency will adopt the most effective measures for the accomplishment of your mission in this respect, and that after completing the evacuation you will take the necessary steps for establishing an organised Government in the different provinces of the Soudan for the maintenance of order and the cessation of all disasters and incitements to revolt." Now

¹ Vol. i. p. 191.

² Vol. ii. p. 395.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

all this his biographer, we think rightly, believes he would have done, had he not been thwarted and obstructed by our late Government. It was Gordon's fate, it is the fate of all great and good men, to be obstructed in the performance of their high functions and noble duties by the villains and fools in the world. While in Egypt as Governor of the Equator, and subsequently as Governor-General of the Soudan from 1874 to 1879, he was obstructed, and had all his plans for good frustrated by the Pashas who pulled the wires—golden wires—at Cairo. During these eleven sad months we have been speaking of, some of which are bitterly chronicled in the pages before us, he was checked and baulked in almost as systematic a way by the Government of England. The editor of these volumes believes that had the late Government been content to do nothing, had they merely withheld their support instead of doing that and interfering and negating every project Gordon proposed—had they been passive instead of apparently actively antagonistic, Gordon might have succeeded in the mission he had undertaken, and might have been alive to-day.¹ Had he been alive we suspect we should have heard nothing of the mean apology which the Government has ventured to put forward for themselves. They say now that Gordon had peculiar views. Well, from the Government standpoint of indecision, we can understand that anything like fixity of purpose would be regarded as peculiar. And they say too that Gordon was disobedient to orders. There are few depths of meanness to which the apologists of Governments will not stoop; but we did think that this last act was beyond the miscreant power of sycophants. That they should by their indecision,² by their folly, have rendered the evacuation

¹ Vol. i. Introduction, p. xli.

² Their indecision was even more evident to Gordon, who was a man of promptitude and whose will was quick to perform what his mind was wise to conceive. Thus, he says on October 5, 1884: "No one can judge the waste

impossible, that they should have sent expeditions to rescue and retire which always arrived in time to retire without rescuing, was in Gordon's words "a farce if it did not deal with men's lives"; but that they should, after marring the prospects of one of the best men and ablest soldiers this century has seen, attempt to detract from his fame by the paltry meanness we have mentioned, is unworthy even of political morality.¹ That Gordon was justified in all he did, and that the imputation which has been made against him is utterly unfounded, appears not only from the careful Introduction to these volumes but from the Journals themselves. Mr. Egmont Hake shows conclusively that there was no disobedience upon Gordon's part of any order to which he was bound to attend, and that General Gordon never went beyond the limits of his commission. Such a telegram as that of Lord Granville, "that undertaking these military expeditions was beyond the scope of the commission he held, and at variance with the policy which was the purpose of his mission to the Soudan,"² only indicates that either Lord Granville did not know the scope of Gordon's commission, or that he sought to cancel the Firman of the Khedive by implication. Probably the former is the most charitable explanation.³ But it is

of money and expense of life in the present expedition; it is an utter waste of both, but it is simply due to the indecisions of our Government," vol. i. p. 149; and the Journals are full of similar sentences.

¹ Gordon had ample reasons for his low opinion of Governmental morality. "We are," he says in one place, "an honest nation, but our diplomatists are conies and not officially honest," vol. i. p. 22. "I hate Her Majesty's Government for leaving the Soudan after having caused all its troubles," vol. i. p. 28. "I must say I hate our diplomatists," vol. i. p. 223.

² Earl Granville to Mr. Egerton, April 23, 1884—"Egypt," No. 12 (1884), No. 36.

³ Gordon shows that he did not credit the Government with too intimate a knowledge of these matters in a satirical passage which is worth quoting in a note. It describes an imaginary scene in the House of Lords. "The noble Marquis asked what the policy of Her Majesty's Government was? It was as if he asked the policy of a log floating down stream—*it was going to sea*, as any one with an ounce of brains could see. Well, that was the policy of

possible that they also regard him as disobedient in not leaving Khartoum when they told him that he was free to go. It was the bad luck of the late Government to flounder on from one position of doubt and difficulty into another position where their doubts and difficulties were greater. It perhaps always is the fate of those whose policy waits on events instead of making events wait upon their policy. For the nonce the Government was saved by Gordon's journey to Khartoum. But then, after they had rejected every proposal he made with a view to the main objects with which he was charged, both by our own and the Egyptian Government, and had in that way tied his hands in Khartoum—a situation in which, if in any, a man of judgment ought to have been free to act—they discovered that they had to account to the country for General Gordon's life; and, forgetting all about the garrisons he went to evacuate, forgetting all about the European population of Khartoum, and the thousands of loyal adherents for whose safety the heart of the Khedive ached,¹ they, with a view of extricating themselves from their difficulty, advised General Gordon to get out of Khartoum. That they advised this course at a time when it was impossible, was only of a piece with the usual policy of the Government. How this struck Gordon can be gathered, not without a sense of indignation against the Government, by those who will read these Journals. In one place he says :—

“I do not question the policy of Her Majesty's Government in not keeping the Soudan. It is a wretched country, and not worth keeping. I do not pretend even to judge the policy of letting the garrisons, &c.,

it, only it was a decided policy and a straightforward one to drift along and take advantage of every circumstance. His lordship deprecated the frequent questioning on subjects which his lordship said he knew nothing about, and further, did not care to know anything about.”

¹ See *Pall Mall Gazette* Extra, “Too Late,” No. 14.

perish ; but I do say I think that Her Majesty's Government ought to have taken the bold step of speaking out and saying, 'SHIFT FOR YOURSELF' *in March* when I could have done so, and not now, when I am in honour bound to the people after six months' bothering warfare. Not only did Baring not say '*Shift for yourself*,' but he put a veto upon my going to the Equator—*vide* his telegrams in Stewart's Journal. I say this because no one deploras more the waste of money and life in this expedition, and no one can realise its difficulties better than myself; but, owing to what has passed, owing to indecision, we are in for it, and the only thing now to do is to see how to get out of it with honour and the least expense possible—and I see no other way than by giving the country to the Turks."¹

And in another place he says: "As for *evacuation*, it is one thing, as for 'ratting out,' it is another. I am quite of advice as to No. 1 (as we have not the decision to keep the country), but I will be no party to No. 2 (this 'rat' business)—1st. Because it is dishonourable; 2nd. Because it is not *possible (which will have more weight)*; therefore, if it is going to be No. 2 the troops had better not come beyond Berber till the question of what will be done is settled."² But those who desire to see how ill-founded the charge of disobedience is must read these pages for themselves.

But while the Government by this fine instrument of innuendo have attempted to put the dead man in the wrong, they have, during the 'whole course of this miserable business, been putting themselves in the wrong at every turn. To-day we may forget their innumerable blunders; but history has a long memory.

¹ Vol. i. p. 150.

² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

To-day we are so mixed up with the recent events, so busy with the events which are our guests to-day, the blood relations of those that have just gone, that we cannot be wholly impartial. But when our times are seen from a distance, when the heat of the contest has passed away, posterity will be able to judge these Governments rightly, and we venture to prophesy that these new times will not acquit our late Government of having conducted a most foolish policy with reference both to the Soudan and General Gordon. Out of their own mouths they can, as the present editor shows, be condemned. Mr. Gladstone said, "It was our duty, whatever we might feel, to beware of interfering with Gordon's plans, and before we adopted any scheme that should bear that aspect (*i.e.*, the aspect of interference), to ask whether *in his judgment* there would or would not be such an interference." And Sir Charles Dilke said: "He" (Gordon) "is better able to form a judgment than anybody. He will have, I make no doubt, every support he can need in the prosecution of his mission." Yet it will scarcely be credited that these were the men who refused every one of Gordon's requests, who set themselves to thwart him at every turn, who, instead of treating him as their trusted representative to evacuate the Soudan and to restore order to the distracted desert, treated him as an enemy, whose every move should be checked and checkmated. A few illustrations will show that this was what they did. Gordon thought it might at some time be advantageous if he visited the Mahdi, but Sir E. Baring gave him a positive order from Her Majesty's Government that he was on no account to do so. This was the person who, according to the views of the Cabinet, was better able than anybody to form a judgment. Gordon proposed to go direct from Khartoum to the Bahr Gazelle and the Equatorial Provinces, but the Government refused to allow him

to go further than Khartoum.¹ We have already seen Gordon suggesting that 3000 Turkish troops in British pay should be sent to the Soudan,² but Her Majesty's Government, advised by Sir E. Baring, disapproved of the measure and the troops were not sent. Gordon had all along been of opinion that some form of government was essential to the safety of the Soudan, and he had always, as we have said, recognised the slave-trade organisation as a kind of government. He found himself in Khartoum in the middle of the Soudan, and anarchy was all round it. He suggested, wisely on the whole, that Zubair should be appointed as his successor or as his coadjutor. He gave some excellent reasons why that course should be taken, and he reiterated his request over and over again, but his requests were invariably met with refusals. "Her Majesty's Government would not permit the Khedive to make this appointment."³ He requested that Indian Moslem troops should be sent to Wady Halfa. Of course this request was refused. In March he asked for 100 British troops to be sent to Assouan or to Wady Halfa.⁴ Sir E. Baring said he would not risk sending so small a body; but no larger body was sent.⁵ It was also discovered that the climate would exercise an injurious effect on the troops; and of course the troops were not sent. After the fall of Berber, Sir Evelyn Baring telegraphed to Lord Granville that it had now become of the utmost importance not only to open the road between Suakin and Berber, but to come to terms with the tribes between Berber and Khartoum. This had been suggested by Gordon more than once, but of course only met with refusals.

¹ See Earl Granville to Sir E. Baring, February 11, 1884—"Egypt," No. 12, No. 4.

² Vol. i. p. 136, *note*.

³ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xxxviii.

⁴ "Egypt," No. 12 (1884), Enclosures 5, No. 229.

⁵ "Egypt," No. 12, No 170. Sir E. Baring to Earl Granville.

Now Lord Granville replies to Sir E. Baring : "General Gordon had several times suggested a movement on Wady Halfa which might support him by threatening an advance on Dongola, and under the present circumstances at Berber this might be advantageous." It is scarcely necessary to accumulate instances, but one more may be given. Gordon came to the conclusion that "the Mahdi must be smashed."¹ We think that it is probable that any one with Gordon's means of information would have come to the same conclusion. The object of Egypt and of this country was to extricate the garrisons from their threatening environment, and to establish some form of government which would secure order in the Soudan, with the view that the Soudan should no longer be a threat to Lower Egypt. To do the former, without at the same time accomplishing the latter, Gordon saw would be futile. To rescue and retire at once, or "skedaddle" as he called it, would be to strengthen the Mahdi immensely, and to invite invasion into the Egyptian borders. To make Egypt safe we must make England respected, and to secure respect at the hands of the people of the Soudan, it was necessary to show England's power. It was necessary, therefore, that the Mahdi should be smashed. But Her Majesty's Government, who thought that Gordon alone was in a proper position to form a judgment of the situation, declined to countenance any such proceeding. Ultimately they came to the same opinion as General Gordon. Their own general used the same phrases, and wrote to natives that—"You know Gordon Pasha's countrymen are not likely to turn back from any enterprise they have begun until it has been fully accomplished. When that happy event takes place, I hope to be able to establish you (Cassim el Mousse Pasha) amongst your own people, and that you and all others will realise

¹ And see Journals, vol. i. pp. 87 and 138.

that the English nation does not forget those who serve it faithfully." We say again that if men's lives had not been in question, it would be as laughable as a farce. Lord Wolseley's letter reads like the finest irony; for if the late Government have proved anything to the people of the Soudan, it has been precisely that the countrymen of Gordon are likely to turn back from an enterprise before it has been accomplished, and that the English nation does forget those who serve it faithfully. No, not the English nation. That with all their diplomacy they could not prove. The English nation will hold Gordon's name and fame in admiring memory for centuries, in spite of the failures which were forced upon him by the late Government. Do not let it be supposed that we indict the Government for more than Gordon himself laid to their charge. It is, we think, a fault of those in office to have no definite and straightforward policy. It is a fault to time-serve the crotchet-mongers of the party. It is a fault when a Government has found a capable servant in whose judgment they can rely, not to rely upon it, but to thwart his every action. It is a fault always to be too late in doing even the right thing. All these faults we think the Government committed. We have said that some of the members of the Government party have attempted to white-wash themselves by black-washing Gordon. That that baseness will not stand them in any stead after these volumes have been read by the public, we are confident.

But it is pleasant to leave this question, and to turn to another aspect of these volumes. Of course they cannot fail to be sad reading to those who regard the country as in some sense responsible for the death of the excellent man who penned these memorials of those painful months. At the same time we think these Journals are excellent reading—some, indeed, of the

wholesomest pages we have met with for some time. Some one has said that there is no medicine like a good friend, and we can understand that the daily high yet familiar intercourse with a really great man must be an excellent tonic. It was Steele—was it not—who spoke of a certain lady “whom to have known was a liberal education”? When personal intercourse is impossible, the next best thing is to be let into the real confidences of such an one by written words. Here, then, we have this. Of course, the fact that a journal is written from day to day, and must necessarily contain many trivial matters, takes from the value of the work as an æsthetic whole. But while, as a mere literary performance, this may not come up to our ideal, on the other hand there is a reality about it, an earnestness, an honesty, which, in our eyes, transcends the merits of more carefully ordered compositions.¹ The fault of most written matters is that the man who writes is a master of expression, but is ignorant of facts or incapable of deeds. It is in this way that most literature fails; for the real workers in the world can usually work only with one tool, it may be a sword or it may be a pen, but it is seldom both. In these Journals we find some excellent straightforward English, which never fails of its purpose of making the facts appear, and which at the same time brings out strongly the one sterling fact of

¹ We have noted here and there errors which might, we think, have been corrected in proof. This sentence is scarcely grammatical: “They might have gone down together had they mutually have known of one another’s departure,” vol. i. p. 11. On page 30 the word “quick” is printed instead of “quickly.” On page 153 “one of the men say,” should read “one of the men says.” And one of the editor’s own sentences in the Introduction (p. xxii) is, we think, ambiguous: “Had the Egyptian Government watched and warded off the regeneration of the slavers after Gordon dealt his final blow on Suleiman’s death,” &c. The sentence, too, on p. xxvi, which begins “So that for eleven months,” &c., is made nonsense of by the words “and to spare” occurring in it without connection. On p. xxii, too, in the sentence which begins with the words “The events which followed” on p. xxi, there is a superfluous “by.” But these are small matters and very easily corrected.

Gordon's personality. This is not the place to praise him, even if he needed praise, but it may be worth while to illustrate one or two of his personal traits. Gordon was eminently honest, not only honest in his own acts—a good many of us are that—but too honest to profit by the treacherous acts of others. Here is a sentence which is not preaching, but which is better than many sermons : “Politically and morally, however, it is better for us not to have anything to do with the apostate Europeans in the Arab camp. Treachery never succeeds, and, however matters may end, it is better to fall with clean hands than to be mixed up with dubious acts and dubious men. Maybe it is better for us to fall with honour than to gain the victory with dishonour, and in this view the Ulemas of the town are agreed ; they will have nought to do with the proposals of treachery.”¹ This has some sadness in the light of later events. He is so brave as to be able to confess to fear. “For my part I am always frightened, and very much so. I fear the future of all engagements. It is not the fear of death—that is past, thank God—but I fear defeat and its consequences. I do not believe a bit in this calm unmoved man.”² Here is what seems to us an excellent piece of advice : “I think if, instead of ‘Minor Tactics,’ or books on art of war, we were to make our young officers study ‘Plutarch’s Lives,’ it would be better ; there we see men (unsupported by any true belief—pure Pagans), making, *as a matter of course*, their lives a sacrifice ; but in our days it is the highest merit not to run away.”³ Every one who knew him knew what a kind heart he had. And here we find him remorseful

¹ Vol. i. p. 6.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ Ibid., p. 26. It is curious to note the affection which most real readers have for “Plutarch’s Lives.” Montaigne says, “I never settled myself to reading any book of solid learning but Plutarch and Seneca ;” Emerson says, “I must think we are more deeply indebted to him than to all the ancient writers ;” and Franklin seems to have been of the same opinion as to his uses and merits.

often for some of the harshnesses which were thrust upon him by his sense of duty. Here is only one illustration: "I have led the officers and officials the lives of dogs while I have been up here; it is spurs in their flanks every day, nothing can obliterate this ill-treatment from my memory."¹ One would think he was speaking of something he had himself suffered. For these things our memories are long; for the sufferings we have caused they are generally short enough. "This morning, October 13, 1884, some twelve of those arrested and allowed to stay in their houses are to be taken to the barracks. I hate these arrests, but we can scarcely doubt so many informants."² There are, too, here and there streaks of genial humour in these Journals,³ which make the whole of the black texture, ending, as we know, with his tragic death, even more lurid, but at the same time they raise *the man* in the opinion of those who only through these pages become familiar with him. No man can be complete unless he can laugh, and many of the passages in these Journals, sometimes humorous and sometimes satirical, will spread the infection to his readers. It is curious to think of a laugh coming to us from beleaguered Khartoum. But we cannot in this place do more than refer the reader to these very wholesome pages. These volumes are issued in no hostile spirit, as the Notes which have been supplied by Sir Henry W. Gordon⁴ will show, but they have been issued with the intention of setting the truth before the public. To that, at least, the public are entitled. In doing so they will enable even careless readers to form a just conception of the abilities and

¹ Vol. i. p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³ When he went to Egypt first he made it clear that his motto was *huryat* (liberty), and explained that it meant that no man should interfere with another, that there should be an end of kidnapping and plunder, and an end of the Pashas, and those who objected were told that his motto included *their* liberty to quit.

⁴ Pp. 55-56.

character of the man we have lost—from what is in some senses a history of the last two months of the siege of Khartoum, and in some senses an autobiography of Gordon's life during those tragic times. But, of course, as was inevitable, there are glances in these pages at more than the stirring current events, there are glances before and after. And it is impossible, we think, to read these without at the same time thinking of our policy in Egypt in the past, and also trying to forecast what will be our serious duties in the future. The present Government is new to office, and no doubt it took over no very well ascertained and clearly defined policy with reference to Egyptian affairs. There may be some excuse for them if they "drift" for awhile—if they appoint another Special Commissioner to inquire. They have a lull in affairs in the Soudan in their favour. The sleeping dog of revolt in that country may for a time be let alone. But that we are in smooth waters with reference to the troublous matters which have cost us so much, and in connection with which we have reaped so little, we do not believe. It is no doubt true, that if you neglect duty long enough it ceases to be a duty. There are no longer the garrisons to be relieved. The European inhabitants of Khartoum, for which the Khedive's heart bled, have ceased to be, and hearts can cease to bleed for them. Gordon, whose relief this country peremptorily demanded with no uncertain voice, when it was at last—but too late—aroused to a sense of his situation, is past relief. But our interests in Egypt still remain. We must secure our avenue to India. We are still bound to see that in Egypt "anarchy should not prevail." To do so, we must still, as Gordon saw, secure some sort of Government for the Soudan. Savagery on the borders of civilisation is always a threat. We wish Sir H. Drummond Wolff all success in his mission. It is significant that his mission has taken him to Cairo through Constantinople, and we

shall not be surprised if we hear that the necessary order in the Soudan is to be secured by one of the very expedients which General Gordon pressed upon the late Government, expedients which, as we see, they persistently rejected. But whatever the future is to be, it will not have the advantage of the services of one who above all others was capable of bringing peace and prosperity to that country, which is only waiting for some wise ruler to enforce upon it its duties towards its neighbours and its duty towards itself. The only memorial of a man is that which he raises to himself, and we have one, which will we think be lasting, in these volumes, raised almost by the "dead hand" to Charles Gordon.

IX

PARTY GOVERNMENT¹

VIVISECTION in the case of animals is forbidden by Act of Parliament without a Home Secretary's licence, but the vivisection of institutions is the daily *duty* of politicians. Indeed, the time has gone past when the fact that an institution existed was regarded as an adequate reason for its continued existence, and every social arrangement is nowadays, as it were, continually on its trial. Such a circumstance, while it adds to the interest of life, contributes to a feeling of uncertainty and instability, which may possibly be an excellent condition of intellectual growth. Some botanists have held that the way in which the branches of trees are tossed about by the winds has been the means of their expansion and growth, and a similar theory might be advanced as to the intellectual branches in relation to troublous times. Now these days are by no means politically calm. At one time it was thought that self-preservation was one of the chief ends and duties of a State. A Government may have many important functions to subserve, but as little Jane Eyre, when the horrors of hell had been luridly depicted to her, and when she was asked by her would-be spiritual guide what she must do to avoid these awful tortures, answered, "I must keep well, and not die"; so the first and main

¹ 1. "Popular Government." Four Essays. By Sir Henry Sumner Maine, K.C.S.I., LL.D., F.R.S. London. 1886.

2. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." By James Fitzjames Stephen, Q.C. (now Mr. Justice Stephen). Second Edition. London. 1874.

duty of a State used to be "to keep well, and not die." But we are far from certain that that is the orthodox creed of the statecraft of to-day. The continuity of a State on its existing basis seems to be, in the eyes of many statesmen, a small matter. There are many readjustments upon a great scale going on around us. We think Mr. Fiske is right when he says that "throughout the turmoil of the historic period, which on a superficial view seems such a chaos, we see certain definite tendencies at work—the tendency towards the formation of larger and larger political aggregates, and towards the more perfect maintenance of local self-government and individual freedom among the parts of the aggregate"; but, at the same time, while there are illustrations of these tendencies in our own time, there does seem to be a new development of tendency, and that is a tendency to break up these political aggregates, and to constitute local self-government upon an entirely independent basis. No doubt we see that peoples of one blood and colour and race peculiarity, which have been separated, are in parts of the world uniting to form a solid nationality. European nations have been sending their flags into quite distant lands, and annexations are too numerous to be mentioned. But, at the same time, although there is an undoubted tendency to the aggregation we have alluded to, there are indications of another tendency. Separate races, which have been under one rule for centuries, have shown unmistakable signs of "living off." There are "fissions" taking place in old bodies politic, and with one of these our statesmen of to-day have to deal.¹ But we do not desire to deal with the question of Home Rule in this place. We only mention the Irish question as an apt illustration of the very loose hold which the roots of most institutions have, in these days, in the ground of national life. At the same time, we think there is a strong tendency for

¹ Norway and Sweden, 1905.

every age to regard the institutions which are its own children with too much favour. Men are too much inclined to accept the tendencies which are manifested in their own day as absolutely good; and we think it is to that fact that we have to ascribe the stupid enthusiasm with which certain catchwords, such as Liberty and Equality, have been unquestioningly received by our times, and the efforts which have been made to work political magic with them. It requires the ponderous sense of a writer like Mr. Justice Stephen to give those enthusiasts a "douche," and to bring them back from their literary hysterics to a consciousness of the true facts of the case, as he does in the cogent pages of the work before us.

But there are some other directions in which a trial of some of our boasted institutions may be salutary. If there is one institution which seems to us to deserve to be on its trial at the present time, it is Government by Party. It is curious to observe how, in a country like ours, where as we have said almost every principle is called in question, and where the broadest lights are brought to bear with searching illumination, there should still be some unexplored places into which the light of reason has not penetrated. There are various drawing-room tricks which indicate the security with which an article may be concealed from persons who are told to search for it by a candid absence of all concealment. And so it seems that those institutions which, like party government, are in the full glare of everyday light, escape all but the most casual observation. It is, however, time that this matter should be looked into. Indeed, some of its curious phases are being thrust upon our notice at the present time in a way which demands attention.

At first sight, a system of government by party seems unfeignedly ridiculous. But for the fact that it exists, and that the enthusiasm of most men is attached to one

side or the other, the absurdity of the arrangement must have been painfully evident long ago. That the work of government should be done for a time by one set of men, while another set do nothing but cavil at them, and that when their criticisms have brought about some catastrophe the cavillers should do the work of governing the nation, while those who were lately in power become the critics, does not, at first sight, commend itself to one's mind as at all a rational system. It is difficult to believe that the country has, at any one time, at its disposal two sets of men equally capable of governing; and even if we were convinced of the fact that it was so fortunate, we should think it a curious waste of the highest moral and intellectual power which the country can produce, that while the one set were doing the work, the other set should be doing their best to make it impossible for the first to discharge their all-important duties. Such a method has never been tried in the transaction of any other business than that of Government. Had it had any inherent excellence, surely we should have found it in other departments of affairs. Its continued existence in relation to the art of governing is to be accounted for, as we shall see, not by its efficacy, but by other circumstances which of themselves go far to discredit it, as an institution. But against this view, we have no doubt the startling fact that party government is not a new thing, and that it seems on the whole to have worked fairly well, or at least without positive disaster to the country. We confess our entire allegiance to facts, and are willing to admit, as a rule, that that which works well is a great deal better than that which can be reasoned well about. But the fact that government by party has not been productive of disaster, is only to be accounted for by the circumstance that, whenever an emergency has arisen which would test the efficiency of the system and find it

wanting, the common sense of the men, in and out of office, came to the front, and that which was necessary to be done was done by all concerned without any regard to the system of government by party. Every reader of the daily prints has become familiar with the phrase, "this is not a party question," applied with increasing frequency to matters which would formerly have been regarded, and which in many instances are still regarded, as fair fields for party fights. But that of itself seems to indicate that this system of government is like an unseaworthy ship which may sail well enough on smooth seas, but which will go to pieces under any stress of weather. The wisdom of those on board has been shown in the past by deserting the good ship—Party—whenever the skies threatened.

One can easily understand two systems of government existing. We can, too, appreciate the fact that, by a certain class of men, any change in the institutions of a country in which they have prospered, might be regarded as a kind of sacrilege, and that, by another class of men, innovation might be regarded as giving at any rate a chance of betterment.

We know that there are these two tendencies in human nature, and that men are influenced largely in their political principles by their personal interests. We say, then, that we can understand these differences of opinion, although but for the existence of parties the one set of opinions would, on many occasions, be held by both sets of thinkers. But why the country should be given over for a time to the one, and then again be put in the comparatively untried hands of the other, we cannot understand. That there may exist two schools of medicine, that the one should practise homœopathy and the other allopathy, is by no means a matter for surprise. We can appreciate the intellectual attitude of him who adopts the one or the other as a method of remedy for his physical complaints, but by

two-faced Janus we cannot follow the vagary of him who would have his body treated by these two systems alternately. And it seems to us as serious an anomaly that a country should be now at the mercy of one party and now at the mercy of another.

We said we could understand the existence of parties in a State, but the history of parties is not without instruction. That history, from the time of the Revolution, has been more than once written; and while we admit that at many prior periods of our history, when all-important domestic matters, such as clericalism or puritanism, a Hanoverian or a Jacobite dynasty, monarchy or republicanism, were the questions to be decided, party in the State was a necessity, and the House of Commons might well be a wordy Bosworth-field, we cannot see that there is any ground for a continuance of an institution which may have had its uses, but which is now remarkable only for its inconveniences. To us it seems certain, that we must look further back for the origin of party than most historians have done. The history of primitive races throws a remarkable light upon civilised men and their institutions. It is now well understood that war has been one of the means of social evolution. Wherever life could be alone supported by hunting or fishing, or by seizing that which was already in existence, war was inevitable. The races of to-day are descended from those who were fittest to survive in the past, when fitness to survive was another expression for treachery, quick-wittedness, cruelty, and strength of will, which made them the conquerors in a universal quarrel. In these times, men were little better than wolves, and it was only within the limits of the family circle that peaceful co-operation, that higher motives and better sentiments, began to spring up. When, however, men learned the art of planting corn and of rearing cattle, then the necessity for belligerency passed away, the

goodwill of the family spread to the neighbours, and territorial contiguity and community of occupation began to lay the foundations of what was ultimately to be a national existence of which patriotism is the spirit. Under these circumstances, then, we cannot doubt that war had its great uses. It not only tended to the elimination of the unfit in early stages of human progress, but it brought about the beginnings of social association, which was to become the foundation of the State. It is true that the long period of infancy, which is a peculiar characteristic of humanity, led to the formation of those ties which made the family an enduring unit in social organisation. But it was no doubt the existence of a state of warfare which induced the limits of the family to be spread, and which extended the feelings of fellowship at first to the clan, and ultimately to the country. It is quite true, as we have indicated, that the prosecution of agriculture led to a change in this respect. Men who had no longer to live by appropriating that which was in existence, but who could live by productions which came from the bounty of the soil or the increase of their flocks, did not require the strength and cunning of the robber, but did require the patience of the husbandman and the shepherd. And further, as a condition of the success of their undertakings, they required peace. It was in this way that the scythe beat the sword, and that the lamb conquered the war-horse. But the processes of evolution are very slow, and war had been so long a trade, not only of man but of his predecessors in title, that it has taken centuries to pave the way to the millennium. And we cannot but think that party strife is a real survival of that old and universal quarrel which existed between those who had and those who wanted. Sir Henry Maine, too, in the careful work upon "Popular Government," to which we shall have other occasions to refer, recognises the same fact, for

he says: "Party feeling is probably far more a survival of the primitive combativeness of mankind than a consequence of conscious intellectual differences between man and man. It is essentially the same sentiment which in certain states of society leads to civil intertribal, or international war; and it is as universal as humanity."¹

To us it seems certain that, although intellectual differences may have something to do with the aggregation of men into parties, personal interests and sympathies have far more to do with political creeds than rational men like to admit, and that the warlike propensities of our ancestors—propensities which it would not be difficult to show have had commercial encouragements in our own day—have a good deal to do with the fact that we have in this country at the present time a government by squabble. It has always seemed to us that if real intellectual difference was the foundation of party creeds, there would be almost as many parties as there were men thinking about politics. There would certainly never be two parties in the State only, for there are not simply two descriptions of men, but all sorts and conditions of men; and if they were free to think for themselves, each man would be really an independent party in himself. Parties are really not founded on intellectual differences, and reason is only called in to defend the position which has been chosen by some of the needs or the greeds of the men who are the leaders. It is easy under these circumstances for men to "sink minor differences" for the sake of party organisation, but whether that is a satisfactory method of governing a great country must depend, it seems to us, upon quite other considerations.

The existence of these well-defined differences of opinion which are the badges of the hostile camps of

¹ "Popular Government," p. 36.

politics, has one effect to which our attention is invited by what has been said above, and that is, that it tends to put an end to originality in political thinking. Men are dubbed Conservatives or Radicals, and their political life then becomes a matter of follow my leader. The man who has "notions" in politics, who differs from his fellows or his leaders in opinions, is looked at with the suspicion which falls upon a deserter. He is regarded as insubordinate. He is either an impracticable man, a doctrinaire, or he is playing his own little game to have his mouth stopped by the loaves of office, or his hands tied by the red tape of a department. All originality is thus discouraged under the system of party, and that for the best of reasons. Most men who have taken part in the game of party politics have their sympathies enlisted far more by the interest of the party with which they are connected than with the State which that party governs or is anxious to govern. And that fact arises partly from the circumstance that his own interests are far more intimately connected with the success of the party than with the welfare of the State, and by the circumstances that there is warfare in question, that the getting or keeping of office is a matter of skill or tactics, and that

"The shouts of war are heard afar,
The glittering spears are ranked ready."

There is naturally a stirring of the blood in men's veins which issues in enthusiasm of thought, which is seldom or never elicited by the needs of the country unless an actual invasion of our shores is imminent. It is, then, not a matter for surprise that party men think far more of their party than of the country, but it is a matter, it seems to us, for deep regret. That men's enthusiasm should only be at the command of the wordy strifes of party, and that they should not

be at the service of the State except upon those onerous conditions, seems to us to be a matter which of itself is sufficient to condemn party government.

We have said that this system tends to the "ruling out" of all originality in political thinking. And that is shown conclusively by the fact that the really able and original political writers have in our time, as a rule, been men who were not really connected with party government. The two books, the titles of which stand at the head of this article, are illustrations of that proposition, and the name of Mr. Frederic Harrison will occur to many readers, and they will remember that he wisely refused to have anything to do with public politics. But the same tendency is shown not only in the rank-and-file of Parliament, but in society and in the press. Conversation about politics begins and ends with the question, Are you a Whig or a Tory? And if a man has the courage to say he is neither the one nor the other—and although few men have the courage, most independent men of real acumen would honestly be best described by such a negative statement—he is looked upon as a curiosity—as neither flesh nor fowl nor good red herring; and the conversation languishes just as it would if he had donned his label. At present the penalties are so great that no man covets the name of "independent," for every politician with any ambition must fall into the ranks of the one organisation or the other, and wear the uniform of party. And the camp followers of politics, the press, assume the same badges and echo the same war-cries.

But when by the elimination of differences of opinion, when by means of party discipline you have got your army, and your opponents have by the same tactics got theirs, that you two should govern the country between you is a ridiculous notion. The description that the government of the country should

be a bone between these two snarling dog-parties is scarcely an exaggeration of the facts. But what is the result of this current method of government?

It is well to remember that under all systems of government the number of persons who actually do govern is very small. We are apt to talk about the government of the people, by the people, for the people; but when the matter comes to be looked at it will be found that it is not the people who really govern, but the man who has succeeded in procuring for his party followers the greatest number of votes at a general election. This is clearly stated by Mr. Justice Stephen, and quoted with approval by Sir Henry Maine:—

“Political power [he says] has changed its shape but not its nature. The result of cutting it up into little bits is simply that the man who can sweep the greatest number of them into one heap will govern the rest. The strongest man in some form or other will always rule. If the government is a military one, the qualities which make a man a great soldier will make him a ruler. If the government is a monarchy, the qualities which kings value in counsellors, in generals, in administrators, will give power. In a pure democracy, the ruling men will be the wire-pullers and their friends; but they will no more be on an equality with the voters than soldiers or Ministers of State are on an equality with the subjects of a monarchy. Changes in the form of a government alter the conditions of superiority much more than its nature.”¹

Now this seems to us in the main true and in the main fortunate. It seems to us to be right that the strong and able men should rule, but that they should rule under checks. The checks which are introduced

¹ “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” Second Edition. Pp. 256, 257.

by the system of party government seem to us of an improper nature. It may be true that the "strongest man will always rule," but the question is, how will the matter be arranged when there are two strong men. Well, in the old days they used to fight the matter out. To-day, although they seem to fight it out at the polling places, they in reality compromise the matter. The spoils which are to be wrung out of the country are in a sense divided between the two strong men who have both swept great numbers of votes into heaps. The country is divided between them, not in space but in time, and they toss up at general elections who is to have the next turn at governing. It may be possible that in this way, by having a minor revolution every six or seven years, we avoid a greater revolution, not unaccompanied with bloodshed, every century; and it may be said that it would be the interest of that second strong man to bring about such a revolution in order that he might occupy the place of the first. But we think that the greater disease could be avoided without suffering the pustule of the smaller, and that the government of the country ought to be able to find room for both its strong men and have ample occasion for the services of both. This, then, seems to us to be one of the reasons for the continued favour with which government by party is regarded; that it is in the nature of a compromise between hostile factions, and that both are kept comparatively quiet and harmless by the division of the spoils of office. But that this is a sufficient reason in the face of all the inconveniences which this method of government is a means to, cannot, we think, be seriously contended. As we say, the proof of the pudding is the eating of it; or perhaps, in these prudent days, the digesting of it. How does the system work? Is the country well governed under this government by combat? That is the real question.

But there are some preliminary considerations which are worth noting.

It is surely too obvious that if party government is the system of ruling, the object of the *ins* will be scarcely so much to govern well as to keep office. The object of the "outs" will be not to see that the *ins* govern well, but to make it impossible for them to govern at all, and to demonstrate their incapacity to the country, and so secure the power for themselves. It is true that the two facts, governing well and retaining office, are in theory supposed to be coincident. No doubt the hypothesis is, that a government which does well remains in office, and that a government which does ill is thrown out of office; but it is not by any means certain that in fact these fates are always in the relation indicated. Indeed, governing well will at no time be the object of a government unless the people of the country, or the majority of the voters, can distinguish between good and bad government. The real object of a popular government in competition will be to satisfy the examining constituencies, and their main object will be to govern in such a way as to give satisfaction to the people, or to "please their patrons," in the language of theatrical managers. That the country will only be pleased with what is really excellent may be the basal theory of the system, and indeed, Mr. Morley, in a recent utterance, playing to the great political gallery, although he was writing in a Review of some standing, seemed to indicate that it was his opinion that the commoner the people the better would be their opinions upon all political matters. We cannot say that we agree with him in that respect. But it must evidently make a considerable difference in the utterances of a publicist whether he is or is not a candidate for a seat in Parliament at the hands of ordinary voters. We are inclined roundly to deny that the country will necessarily be pleased with the

kind of government which is the best for the country. If that theory was tenable for a moment, it would be necessary to account for the protection tariffs of the United States, and of some of our colonies where popular government is having its way, and even to come to more intimate matters, to explain why so many members of the present Parliament were carried to success in their candidature upon the wave of fair trade. But surely, without going into these very obvious instances, it cannot be denied that the object of those who, in a country where office is a matter of contest, hold the portfolios, will necessarily always be rather to secure themselves in office than to govern wisely, and the object of those who happen to be out of office will be rather to secure the seals themselves than to see that those in power make a good use of them. It may be objected to these speculations that we take a low view of human nature. But in answer we plead, that it was because human nature was far from a perfect article that popular institutions had to be resorted to, and that if angels from heaven were to be our rulers there would be at any rate less objection to be made to those forms of government where individual character operated without the democratic checks. But we cannot see that we are doing any injustice to human nature by anticipating the possibility of error in action, and in taking what precautions we can—as in the case of the metals in a compensation pendulum—that the fault shall be a means of curing the evil caused by another.

But further, let us anticipate another objection. It may possibly be said, "But you may make the same objection to the performance of any duties. The first object of a man who secures an appointment is no doubt to earn his salary, but that fact is not sufficient of itself to produce a half-hearted performance of the duties for which he is paid." But there is a very obvious difference between such a case and that of a

man who has an office, to remove him from which another person is scheming. Whenever you remove the element of security from the tenure you direct the efforts of the holder from the duties he is expected to perform to the paramount duty of securing himself in his office. You have, by the very fact that you have made him liable to attack, turned him from a diligent official into, it may be, a very expert schemer.

But as we have already said, no such system has been tried in any other quarter. We have never heard of party management in the case of a company established for business purposes. And we should be surprised if any shareholders interested in having a fair return for the money they had invested, adopted so silly an expedient. It is only in relation to paramount State matters that this bungling and ineffective machinery is tolerated. That which is most like to party government in the ordinary affairs of life is the continuous business in courts of law. No doubt there a system of strife does seem to work well in the interests of justice. That there should be two sides, that the one should urge all it can in favour of a certain proposition, and that another should say all it can against it, does result in the thorough sifting of the matter. But the analogy does not carry us very far, for in the first place no one denies that the thorough discussion of any question in Parliament is a matter to be desired ; and in the second, the successful party in a court of law is not rewarded with the office of his defeated adversary. And further, even in courts of law the matter is not left in the scales of uncertain argument. There is always a judge—who is above the party strife—whose duty it is to hold the balance true, or there is a jury who have to decide upon the facts. Besides, the questions which are tried in courts of law are of a very different description from those which are submitted to a legislative and administrative assembly like the House of Commons. There is

no analogy in parliamentary government to the judge and jury of the courts. It is true there is a Speaker in the House of Commons, but his functions are confined to the decision of mere matters of form and precedence. It is true, too, that the country—the constituents—may be compared to the jury, but they are a jury who have no decision to give upon the matter which is being discussed, who have no real voice in the matter in hand, but who have the power to dismiss this man or that some years hence if his conduct in Parliament has not commended itself to them.

We have had occasion to remark that the element of security in the tenure of an office is almost essential to the faithful discharge of the duties. The benefit of that security ought not to require proof in these days, when the insecurity of tenure has been urged as a reason for the failure of agriculture, and as a ground for the passing of the Irish Land Acts. But why, we should like to ask, should insecurity of office operate beneficially in relation to the difficult duties which must devolve upon our highest officials, when it has been discarded and abandoned in every other relation? The security of tenure in relation to seats on the judicial bench has been recognised as a reason for the absence of corruption from what used to be the purlieus of our judicature, and the same results have followed from making the office of judge permanent instead of temporary in the United States as have been noted in relation to the similar change in this country. But why should a transitory Premier be better suited for his office than a transitory judge for his? Or why, if you cannot trust the interests of some petty contractor and contractee to the judge who has only an insecure hold upon his place and power, are you to trust the affairs of this great nation to a Minister whose principal object and aim is the securing of a majority of votes at the next general election?

When an institution works ill, one has not to seek far afield for instances and illustrations of its failure. Every emergency tries our weapons, and every difficulty in our political life will indicate the weakness and folly of our present system of party government. Could anything illustrate the futility of our arrangements better than the modern instance of the attitude of Greece to this country. During Lord Salisbury's tenure of the office of Foreign Secretary he performed the difficult duties of that office well. There is no dispute about that fact. His doings in various quarters were no doubt necessitated by a long course of good or bad policy, which had been more or less blunderingly carried out by his predecessors; but, under the circumstances, we are all agreed he did well. The Eastern question became less troublous in his firm hands; other running sores in politics began to heal. But in the end of January one of those little nationalities which make the south-east of Europe like a hornet's nest, and keep much larger interests than their own petty ambitions and feuds embroiled, took upon itself to snap its fingers at Lord Salisbury, because at the instant Lord Salisbury was on the brink of that precipice which is called a Ministerial crisis. Sir Horace Rumbold, our Minister at Athens, had informed M. Delyannis that England was prepared to send a fleet into Greek waters should the Greeks persist in refusing to disarm in order to prevent an attack upon Turkey by sea. It is not to be questioned that this action was taken with the approval of the Governments of the Continent. It must have the approval of every man of sense. We all know that such silly filibustering as that contemplated by Greece would open the gaping wound of the Eastern question, and it might be difficult to stanch that wound when once rash fingers have torn it open. But Greece, knowing the insecurity of Lord Salisbury's position, and hoping something from the Hellenic sympathies of his suc-

cessors, refused to disarm, and sent a fleet to sea with sealed orders. No doubt we are disposed to blame Greece, but is it not our own political arrangements that are at fault? That Greece could for a moment have thought of defying England no one supposes, but that Greece might with impunity defy the Minister of England, who was speaking with the feebleness of a dying breath, seems not unreasonable. That the firm policy of Lord Salisbury might be replaced to-morrow by the policy of a divided Cabinet of Whigs and Radicals, that Lord Granville might have the strings of diplomacy again in his limp fingers, were contingencies which Greek Ministers might reasonably reckon on. That at such junctures England should always be within measurable distance of a crisis which may be the means to a reversal of the policy of the moment is, we think, one of the most serious evils of party government. It is unwise to change horses when crossing the ford. But by the constitution of England it is always at some ford that the change has to be made. It is just at the very time when affairs are in such a condition as to make a transference of power from one set of Ministers to another dangerous, that the transference of mounts, that the "swapping," inevitably takes place, or is so imminent as to be an important factor in the politics of Europe. That we have in the past suffered far less in consequence of this foolish arrangement, is due to the fact that in moments of danger the party leaders forget for a time their strife and remember only the duty of patriotism.¹ This has saved us from catastrophe in the past, but can it be relied on in the future? On any occasion when party feelings ran higher in an Opposi-

¹ We think that the reason party government has not proved so disastrous to the country as it easily might have done, must to some extent be ascribed to the fact that we occupy an insular and somewhat outside position in relation to European politics. The streak of silver sea has been too powerful for the blunders of our quarrelling State craft. But no doubt it is also due to the "shoulder to shoulder" theory mentioned in the text.

tion than the feelings of what was due from Englishmen to their country—and there have been indications that that might easily be the case—then the Opposition might so cripple the hands of the rulers of the country, might so play into the hands of a foreign Power, as to injure the country seriously, irreparably. We do not wish in this article to blame one party or another, and we will refrain from giving instances from recent history which give colour to this assertion. But these instances must be green in the memory of our readers.

No doubt the dangers incident to party government are much more likely to be felt and to be seriously prejudicial to the country in relation to foreign politics. But that fact by itself ought to instigate a grave doubt as to the advisability of a system which breaks down whenever the first duty of government—the defence of the State from external aggression—is in question. To us it would seem to suggest the idea, that if there are to be no parties when the rugged front of war shows itself, it must be very questionable whether parties can be an excellent institution when war is not in question at all. The evils of party government may not be so serious in time of peace or in home affairs as in time of war, or in foreign relations. Party government pursued irrespective of our relations to other Powers would soon put an end to the State. That one party in the State should be in favour of our enemy while another “held by England,” would soon put an end to all government by party in this country. But because the evils done by party government may not be so disastrous in domestic matters as they would prove to be if pressed in relation to our external relations—do they not exist? We cannot but suspect a machine which is of such poor service in one relation to be equally inefficacious in another. But if it is so it ought to be provable by instances. We need not go into the remote past for illustrations.

Could anything prove the futility of a system better than the recent political history of the two "great parties," as they are called by courtesy in the State. In early summer the Liberal party had to face a grave political difficulty. They had to perform what has always been regarded as the first duty of a Government—to make life and property safe in one part of Her Majesty's dominions. But there were serious difficulties amongst the Liberals themselves. Some were admittedly in favour of what has unfortunately been called "coercion," and others in favour of conciliation.¹ The Cabinet itself showed the same lines of cleavage which were in the solid block of the party, and so to get over the difficulty of doing their duty they committed a kind of political suicide over the Budget. No one supposed that the defeat on the Budget was the real difficulty which led to the resignation of Mr. Gladstone's second Administration. Both wings of the Liberal party were thinking how they could make their Irish policy tend towards the return of their own supporters at the coming election. Well, then the party which had not got a majority had to form a Government on sufferance. Not that there was any loyal attempt upon the part of the Liberals to assist the Conservatives in governing the country. There was nothing but a selfish desire that they should hold office for the Liberals until after the general election, and a hope that they might do something which would secure a Liberal vote upon that occasion. After that, too, the Liberals thought it might be easier to see how the "cat" of public opinion would jump, and to jump with it, which is the feat which is designated statesmanship. Well, under the circumstances, the Con-

¹ One is reminded by the word conciliation of the couplet—

"Oh sure we are the finest people that ever trod a fruitful sod,
Killing one another for conciliation, hating one another for the love of
God."

servatives did well enough—as well as any Government, which is a Government by the permission of the Opposition, could do. It is true they did not attempt to do the duty which the Liberals had shirked. Ireland was left to be governed by an organisation which is practically at war with England. This is one of the excellent results of the moves, the counter-moves, the manœuvres which are incident to our curious system of party government. Life and property were emphatically not safe in Ireland. Then came the general election. Mr. Gladstone foresaw one of the results of not having a large majority, and asked the country to make him strong enough to outvote the Conservatives and the Parnellites combined. The elections disappointed everybody except the dictator of Ireland. The boroughs, which had been Liberal, went for the Conservatives; the counties, which had been Conservative, went for the Liberals. But, what is far more important, Ireland went for Mr. Parnell. It is no doubt a fact that in many English constituencies the Conservatives were returned by the aid of the Irish vote. Under these circumstances, it became evident that the power was not in the hands of either of the “great parties”—indeed, after this, we think it will very seldom be in their hands—but was in the hands of Mr. Parnell, who had eighty-six votes which he could cast on either side. Now came the time for an exercise of what is called statesmanship; now was the time to forecast the chances of the future so as to secure office now or hereafter. Well, very few of our politicians were far-seeing enough or bold enough to do so. Votes are capricious things, as statesmen begin to know. The Government did not hesitate to go the length of saying that the Union must be maintained, and Mr. Gladstone did not like to move an amendment to the Address. But it was observed that a mere statement of that sort was not enough. Ireland was still in the hands of the National

League. Yet the Government was timid, and it hit upon the fine expedient of sending Mr. Smith to Ireland—to inquire. That is almost the universal resort of weak parties in power. Whenever a question gets troublesome we feel the necessity for further information—their duty having been of course to have got the information before. But that is a convenient way of tiding over a difficult emergency which both parties have continual recourse to. Well, nothing could be weaker at such a juncture than to send Mr. Smith to Dublin to inquire and report. The Government found that out, and then announced what they meant to do, what they ought to have endeavoured to do long ago, and that was to put down the National League and make life and property safe in Ireland. Just then the Government fell on a side issue, because the Parnellites, having had war declared against them by the Government, voted for Mr. Jesse Collings' amendment; and Mr. Gladstone formed his Government. There were some very nice questions for him to answer practically at that time. To rule at all, he must have the Irish vote. To secure that, he must satisfy Mr. Parnell; and in doing so, Mr. Gladstone must lose some of his Whig support. He elected to risk the latter, which was uncertain, in favour of the eighty-six votes, which were certain; and although he had not at all made up his mind how much he would concede, he made Mr. Morley Chief Secretary for Ireland, and toned down the expressions in his own address to his constituents, and in the addresses of his colleagues to theirs, until the unity of Parliaments which he had preached for years disappeared, and unity of Crowns was all that remained. Well, up to that point every separate juncture seems to us to prove the evils of party government. The shirking and shuffling of both parties was continual. The Conservatives had the declaration that they would restore order forced from them. They wanted to have office without declar-

ing what they meant to do as to Ireland, and they wanted to fall on the Procedure Rules, for which they demanded urgency when there was no urgency in the matter. They, like every one else, believed that another general election was not far off, and they desired to have the benefit of the Irish votes in the English constituencies. They were, however, forced to fall on the Irish question after all, and now they take to themselves the greatest credit for having said they would do what was forced upon them. Now, at any rate the country had a right to expect a straightforward policy instead of the shirk and shuffle which had been foisted upon it. But no ; Mr. Gladstone adopted a policy of examination and inquiry, and even on the eve of meeting Parliament wrote begging letters to Irish noblemen asking for information. So far the history is, we think, humiliating and disgraceful. But, in our opinion, nothing could set the serious disadvantages of party government more clearly before us than the simple statement of what has been taking place under our eyes during the past six months. From the beginning to the end of that history we see plenty of tactics, but no statesmanship. No doubt clever moves and counter-moves, but as for the satisfactory conduct of most grave and troublous affairs, that is not to be found in the narrative. That honest men, who ought to feel the responsibility which they have to the country which they are supposed to govern, should lend themselves to such contemptible manœuvres, instead of trying to carry out a straightforward policy of justice and right, is due only to the fact that they are divided into parties.

But it is scarcely worth while to dwell at any length upon events which are so recent. Any one who cares to take the trouble to look a little further back in political history, will find other instances as pregnant of the danger to the country which arises from this policy of dividing a house against itself, and still look-

ing for stability from it. We will only take one instance to show that the evil has been felt in the past. It is all embodied in one sentence of a review of the situation which was written in 1840. The quotation is from the *Dublin Review* of that year. "The mercantile classes," says the writer, "especially complain that matters of great importance to trade have been either wholly neglected or indifferently attended to, while the personal interests of rivals for office absorb the entire attention of the House of Commons."¹ The question at that time was whether Lord Melbourne or Sir Robert Peel should be First Lord of the Treasury, which does not to us seem to be such a momentous question as it appeared in the eyes of rival politicians in 1840. But will the paramount question of to-day, whether Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury is to rule the country, seem a matter of such great importance forty years hence? The matter of importance is that some one man should rule the country, and that he should be assisted in that difficult work by as many able men as possible, and that he should not, so long as he does so, be thwarted and browbeaten by a section of his own countrymen—that his real object should be the welfare of the country he has to rule, and not the organisation of the party which keeps him in power. These seem to us to be far more important matters than the trivial question which at present keeps the country in a continual worry, and which results in the business which ought to be done being shamefully neglected.

But it may be argued that the recent indubitable failure

¹ Here, too, is almost as condemnatory a sentence from *Fraser's Magazine* for August 1863 (p. 238): "It is probable," says the writer, "that Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby may agree pretty much upon the mode in which this country should be governed, but then both cannot govern it at once. And because they both want to, we are to have all this bother about a difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee." And the anomaly never seems to occur to the writer.

of the system, the deadlock to which affairs were reduced at the end of January and the beginning of February, was due to the fact that there was an awkward third party to be reckoned with. It may be said that it is true for months past the Parnellites have been playing a game with the two great parties in the State, that it was their action which led to the contemptible expedient of Mr. Gladstone, when he wrote to Lord De Vesci, and of Lord Salisbury, when he proposed to send Mr. Secretary Smith to Dublin for four-and-twenty hours, and that this scandal in politics would cease if the Irish question were once for all finally disposed of, and the Irish people had a Parliament of their own. We do not think so. A thorn is such a powerful means of directing the attention to its seat, that the sides of our great parties will never, we fear, be without such a reminder. We have no belief that any such concession would be a means of burying the hatchet between Ireland and England. But leaving that matter, is it not obvious that the science of scheming for office is coming to be more thoroughly understood? and with such excellent examples before the eyes of ambitious statesmen, we should not, even if the Irish party cease to exist, be long without another party to take the place of the Nationalists, whose policy would be to play with the two great parties in the State in precisely the same way as Mr. Parnell has so successfully done. Lord Randolph Churchill, in one of his speeches, laughed at the infant nationalities of the Balkan peninsula, but he himself has set the example of how to form an infant party, and how to do the best for the members of that party when a fitting occasion offers. Indeed, this system of party government has two results: it encourages party discipline, and most men who desire to rise will shape their creeds to that of the party they are attached to. But at the same time it does, on occasion, tend to produce "caves,"

"tea-room conspiracies," and the like. Whenever a man is strong enough to detach himself from party, and to carry any considerable number of votes with him into his retirement which may lead to an adverse vote against his former leader, his position and power and influence in the House is altogether disproportioned to the real strength of his following. This fact will always be a means of attracting certain adventurous persons into the outlawry of a cave. It is a game very easily played, and the reward of success is so considerable that it would be well if politicians made up their minds to despair of ever having, at any rate for any long period, only two parties in the State. But if that is so, if our two "great parties" are always to be at the mercy of an adventurous third party, what hope is there that in future the record will be any better than it has been in the past? We have fared quite ill enough in being tossed from hand to hand, between Whig and Tory, between Radical and Conservative; but we shall fare even worse when neither of the historical parties can rule the country except with the assistance of some third party who have the power of deciding the policy. Our only hope is, that this very fact may, from the terrible evils which it manifestly produces, be a means of putting an end to government by party, and bringing us to a rational system of government by the best men able to do the work.

There are one or two curious incidents of the existing system which are worth noting. No doubt the House of Commons was intended to be a legislative body. The permanent departments of the State were meant to be the executive, and that continuity of policy, that accumulation of experience which is necessary to the administration of State affairs, were to reside in these departments. It is a curious comment upon that theory that the heads of all the great departments of the State are changed on an adverse vote in the House

of Commons. We should have thought that if continuity of policy was a matter of importance, that if a memory of the past action in relation to various events was a reasonable desideratum in relation to matters of governing, it was desirable to have them in the chiefs of departments as well as in underlings. No system could, we think, be likely to work well, where the only man in a department who knows nothing of its past working or of its aims for the future, was the chief officer. Yet by reason of the arrangements incident to government by party, that is the condition in which every important department of the State finds itself. All the knowledge is with officials who are not responsible; the only ignorant person is the responsible Minister of the Crown. There are some excellent remarks which bear upon this subject in Mr. Justice Stephen's book, which we quote. In speaking of the Lord Chancellor, the head of the legal department of the State, he says :—

“What with proper assistance he might do in the way of law reform I need not say. The reduction of the law and of the judicial institutions of the country to a rational shape, is a question of time, labour, and special knowledge. The real difficulty, I do not say an insuperable one, but the real difficulty lies in the constitution of Parliament, and in the system of party government, which makes every man who is out of office pick holes in the work of every man who is in office; and every man who is in office considers not what is the best thing to be done, but what he is most likely to carry in spite of opposition. No one acquainted with the subject can doubt that a systematic reform of the law would facilitate every business transaction in the country, add enormously to the value of every acre of land in it, and convert law into an embodiment of justice, a real standard of conduct in every department of life, and so produce a great

effect on both the intellect and the morals of the country."

"Next to the Lord Chancellor comes the Lord President of the Council. One of the first things which would occur to such a government as I have supposed to exist (if, indeed, it would not be pre-supposed in the establishment of such a government) would be the reflection that the present constitution of the Cabinet and the public offices is about as ill-conceived an arrangement for the real despatch of business as could be contrived, however well it may be adapted to the exigencies of party government. The original idea of the Privy Council, as appears from their proceedings, was far better suited to that purpose, though I do not say it is fit for these times. This is not the place for technicalities, which scarcely any one understands; but in general terms I may observe, that a Council for the real transaction of business ought to exercise a direct superintendence over every department of the Government, and ought, either by means of committees or otherwise, to be kept aware of all the great executive questions which arise in different parts of the Government, and to give orders upon them. As matters now stand, each department is a little state with its own little king for the time being, and the control of the whole of the different parts is loose and vague to the highest possible degree. Each Minister may act as he likes in his own dominions up to the point at which any question before him seems likely to attract the attention of Parliament, and threaten the stability of the Ministry. This is not the way to get important questions well settled. If the Cabinet was a real steady governing Council, whose duty it was to pass orders on all the most important matters which might arise in the different departments, Cabinet Ministers would have to work a great deal harder than they do at

present at other matters than making speeches and preparing to answer parliamentary questions."

"After the President of the Council come the five Secretaries of State. Of these offices the Colonial Office, the War Office, the Admiralty, and the India Office have and can have very little to gain, and they have everything to lose by uncertainty of tenure, and continual accountability to every voter in England through his representatives. The relations between England and the Colonies and England and India are relations which it is hardly possible to conduct in a satisfactory way through Parliament. The best thing that Parliament can do with these subjects, generally speaking, is to let them alone, and to a great extent it does so. A smaller and better instructed body, however, dealing with these matters steadily and quietly, might render great services to every part of the British Empire, or rather to every part of the two empires, Colonial and Indian. With regard to the organisation of the army and navy, it hardly admits of a question that they are special matters dependent upon special knowledge, which has hardly any connection at all with party politics.

"The Home Office, perhaps, affords the strongest of all possible illustrations of the extent of the field which lies open for government. If any one were to attempt to say what the internal government of England is, how it is carried on, or how it is superintended, he would be smothered in the attempt under a chaos of Acts, Charters, Commissioners, Boards, Benches, Courts, and Vestries of all sorts and conditions, which have no unity, are subject to no central control in most instances, and are supposed to atone for all their other defects by what Frenchmen praise as '*le self-government*,' which not infrequently means the right to misgovern your immediate neighbours, without being accountable for it to any one wiser than yourself."

"Foreign policy, perhaps, affords as strong an illustration as can be given of the importance of special knowledge. There is no department of public affairs (if we except Indian and Colonial affairs) in which the general level of knowledge is so low. There is none in which popular passions are so violent, so ill instructed, or so likely to produce incalculable mischief."¹

We might quote more from these ponderous and cogent pages, but enough has been cited to show that so acute and clear a thinker has perceived the great disadvantages which in almost every department arises from this curious method of government by party.

But further, let us point to a curious result which has arisen. We have seen that the intention was that the House of Commons should make the laws, and the departments should administer them. As a fact, the functions of these two have been to a great extent reversed. The House of Commons has its finger in almost every administrative act of the Government, and the departments are becoming more and more responsible for all the legislation which finds its way into the Statute-book. This fact is noted by Sir Henry Maine, for he says: "Here we are introduced to the great modern paradox of the British Constitution. While the House of Commons has assumed the supervision of the whole executive government, it has turned over to the executive government the most important part of the business of legislation. For it is in the Cabinet that the effective work of legislation begins."² But this is only another of the curious circumstances which are incident to our approved system of government by party. On this matter of legislation by the permanent officials of our departments, one other matter suggests itself. It is no doubt true, as Sir Henry Maine suggests, that it is a curious reversal

¹ "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," pp. 265, 266, 267.

² "Popular Government," p. 237.

of the scheme of the Constitution that the executive functions should devolve on the unwieldy House of Commons, and that the legislative should be performed by various comparatively unknown persons in Whitehall. But does not that fact suggest that there must be something radically wrong in the system of party government? Surely that is so, and surely every official of any experience knows that were it not for the fact that the permanent officials do govern England, and legislate for England, the system of party government could not exist for a month. What would your new Minister do in, let us say, the Admiralty, the War Office, or the Board of Trade, if it were not for the fact that there is a great permanent staff prepared to carry on the policy, the measures in Parliament, and the working of the executive machine which were under the command of his predecessor? Any Minister who placed himself in antagonism to the permanent staff could not carry on business for a week. Most Ministers are content to be the conspicuous puppets of the permanent staff, who really govern through him. But if this is a true description of what takes place every day—and no one who has been in or has seen anything of Government work will doubt it for a moment—what becomes of the theory that the country is subject to representative government? “But,” it may be said, “why argue against the system of government by party, if it is, as you say, a sham? and if you have, as you seem to desire, government by able permanent officials? Why cannot you suffer the farce to be played out, when the real managers of the country are the persons who have the knowledge and experience which, according to you, are the prerequisites of all wise ruling?” Our answer to these questions is, first of all, that the institutions of a country are not the stage for farces to be acted on; and second, that these migratory chief officials, although

useless in so far as any good is concerned, are far from harmless. They may do much mischief in a department over which they preside. And, further, we object to a system which throws responsibility upon those persons who do not really wield the power. At present the head of a department is responsible for the acts of his subordinates, unless, which is not often the case, he can make a scapegoat of one of them. But when the real work is done by permanent officials, the real honours ought to be bestowed on those who do the work, and the real responsibility ought to rest upon them. This is such an obvious truth that it requires no argument in its support: it will stand alone when once it has been fairly stated. But there are one or two other matters worthy of consideration in this connection. Whenever a man enters public life—and men begin to interest themselves in public affairs at an early age—he must under the present system choose a party; and that very fact makes him anticipate the necessity by adopting a set of tenets at an even earlier age. Thus it is that men who have no rational foundation either in reason or experience for their conclusions, become parrots in politics, and crow the catchwords of the sects. Thus it is that men whose characters are too immature to bear the load of permanent belief with impunity are mentally deformed. They stereotype their beliefs before the necessary corrections “in proof” have been made in them, and issue themselves to the world as very faulty editions of the work “Man.” To this circumstance we ascribe many of the conversions which take place in later life—conversions which are as often the outgrowing of creeds which too unduly cramped the mind—as the conscious adoption of a creed that will pay. To this may be ascribed at least some of the rancour which finds a place in the breasts of partisans. When we point to the misfortune that men should jump into their opinions

and make their convictions too soon, we do not lose sight of the fact pointed out by Mill, that the "convictions of the mass of mankind run hand in hand with their interests and class feelings."

"We have [he added] a strong faith, stronger than either politicians or philosophers generally have, in the influence of reason and virtue over men's minds, but it is in that of the reason and virtue of their own side of the question. We expect few conversions by mere force of reason from one creed to the other. Men's intellects and hearts have a large share in determining what *sort* of Conservatives or Liberals they will be, but it is their position (saving individual exceptions) which makes them Conservatives or Liberals."¹

No doubt the attachments of a creed are at any rate very often more matter of interest than of reason. We flatter ourselves that we are rational beings, but most of us are on this side or that in consequence of quite other motives than those intellectual ones that are called reasons. But even then we say there is the same disadvantage in the system which forces all the young men and women of this country to choose their sides in politics at a time when they are not in a position to know what their true interests really are, and to give them vulgar motives, like the fear of being called a "rat," or a foolish desire to appear consistent, for continuing in a connection which is distasteful to them when they come really to appreciate their true interests under the circumstances.

There is another evil which ought to have been mentioned in an earlier connection. We have seen the evil which results when the two parties in the State are dominated by a small but well-organised third party. It

¹ Quoted by Mr. Morley in the *Fortnightly Review*, January 1886, from a "not republished essay of Mill."

is well to remember, however, that there are evils incident to the system which we are discussing quite apart from that contingency. Otherwise our criticisms might be thought to bear only upon the present state of discontent. We want to show that the evil is in the institution itself, and not in any temporary phase of its working. Take the case, then, where a Ministry is in a large majority in the House of Commons, and there is only one party in opposition. In that case the Minister for the time being is a real dictator. We have had illustrations of that state of things in the past. Ministers have been so powerful that they have practically ruled without any check. If a Minister has a very large majority, then he is not likely to be influenced by the individual opinion of any of his followers, however able. He can "shed" this Minister and that; the Cabinet can "moult" all its gay feathers almost without affecting the position of the leader of the party. So that for the time being the Prime Minister rules with a rod of iron over Parliament and the country. Curiously, too, the case is no better when the majority of the party in power is a very small one—when the party in power is very nearly balanced with the party in opposition. Now, however, the evil is of another sort. The Minister is too feeble to move. The party suffers from a paralysis. Even the necessary acts of government will not be performed with promptitude and courage. Let us take an illustration. Was not the feebleness of the police, was not the silence of the Home Office on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of February, when London was at first in a state of prostration and subsequently of panic, and when no word was spoken to reassure the timid or to discourage the lawless—was not that due to the weakness of the Government?—a weakness which, with telegraphic speed, finds its way into the hands and arms of the executive. True, Mr. Chamberlain refused to receive a deputation of rioters, or of gentlemen who incited to

riot, but he invited them to correspond with him as to the necessary measures for the relief of the unemployed. We cannot but believe that this feebleness was due to the inherent defects of a Government, formed, as Mr. Gladstone's third Administration was, in open alliance with the Irish party, and with gaping cracks between themselves and former colleagues.

We have pointed out how large a part of legislation is initiated in and carried through by the endeavours of the executive departments of the Government. One of the results of party government is that each party tries to outrival its antagonist in adding to the bulk of the Statute-book. Individual members of both parties are in the habit of going to the country and saying, "Look on this picture and on that," and contrasting the legislative achievements of the one party with those of the other. This is the burden of almost every election speech. In this way we have party bidding against party for popular favour by the amount which they have added to the Statute-book. And it is in this way that we have brought about the curious phenomenon commented on by Sir Henry Maine in the work before us.

"There is undoubted danger [he says] in looking upon politics as a deeply interesting game, a never-ending cricket match between Blue and Yellow. The practice is yet more dangerous when the ever-accumulating stakes are legislative measures, upon which the whole future of the country is risked, and the danger is peculiarly great under a constitutional system which does not provide for measures reforming the constitution any different or more solemn procedure than that which is followed in ordinary legislation. Neither experience nor probability affords any ground for thinking that there may be an infinity of legislative innovation at once safe and beneficent. On the contrary, it would

be a safer conjecture that the possibilities of reform are strictly limited."¹

We cannot but think that there is truth in this careful view. No doubt there were in the past many reforms to be effected. We are not going to say that there is not room for wise legislation still left, but we submit that this eagerness to place laws upon the Statute-book, this anxiety to change the form of all existing institutions, and to promote undigested immature measures of reform, has been productive of serious evil, and has opened the way to a course of social legislation, some of the evils of which were pointed out in a former essay, and which are referred to in Lord Fife's letter, in which he resigned the chairmanship of the Scottish Liberal Association.

The usual arguments in favour of the system which we have criticised do not seem to us very cogent. It is said that there are usually two main streams of thought or tendency, and that one of these is in favour of change and reform, while the other is in favour of letting well alone and keeping what we have achieved; and that men may honestly make small sacrifices of principle for the sake of the allegiance to party, without which neither of these tendencies can be brought into effective action. In other words, as it has been put by Sir George Cornwall Lewis: "A parliamentary system," he said, "can only be conducted by the combined operation of parties;"² or as M. de Laveleye has it, "Government by party and by the majority is the only one which can give strength and efficiency to parliamentary institutions." Indeed, this may be taken to be almost the universal excuse, for it is nothing more, for the existence of parties in the

¹ "Popular Government," p. 149.

² Speech in House of Commons, 10th June 1859.

State. Sir Henry Maine is worth quoting in this connection :—

“The truth is [he says] that the inherent difficulties of democratic government are so manifold and enormous, that in large and complex modern societies it could neither last nor work if it were not aided by certain forces which are not exclusively associated with it, but of which it greatly stimulates the energy. Of these forces, the one to which it owes most is unquestionably party. No force acting on mankind has been less carefully examined than party, and yet none better deserves examination. The difficulty which Englishmen in particular feel about it is very like that which men once experienced when they were told that the air had weight. It enveloped them so easily and pressed upon them so equally, that the assertion seemed incredible. Nevertheless, it is not hard to show that party and party government are very extraordinary things. Let us suppose it to be still the fashion to write the apologies so dear to the last century, in which some stranger from the East or West, some Persian full of intelligent curiosity, some Huron still unspoilt by civilisation, or some unprejudiced Bonze from India or China, described the beliefs and usages of European countries, just as they struck him, to his kinsmen at the other end of the world. Let us assume that in one of these trifles by a Voltaire or a Montesquieu, the traveller gave an account of a cultivated and powerful European commonwealth, in which the system of government consisted in half the cleverest men in the country taking the utmost pains to prevent the other half from governing. . . . ‘Many party heroes,’ he would say, ‘have been imagined, who were never seen or known to exist in reality.’ But he would describe them as they really were. Allowing them every sort of private virtue, he would deny that these virtues had any effect on their

public conduct, except so far as they helped to make men believe their public conduct virtuous. But this public conduct he would find to be not so much immoral as non-moral. He would infer from actual observation that the party hero was debarred by his position from the full practice of the great virtues of veracity, justice, and moral intrepidity. He could seldom tell the full truth; he could never be fair to persons other than his followers and associates; he could rarely be bold except in the interests of his faction. The picture drawn by him would be one which few living men would deny to be correct, though they might excuse its occurrence in nature on the score of moral necessity."¹

We will also quote here the views, which are somewhat to the same effect, of Mr. Frederic Harrison:—

“There is urgent need to form public opinion independent of Parliament and of all electoral machinery whatever. The fierce rivalry of parties, and the way in which party absorbs all political thought amongst us, is a growing danger. It may be argued that the healthy organisation of party is an essential condition of parliamentary government. As practised with us, the organisation of party tends to crush and stifle the free play of public opinion. Members of Parliament feel it a duty not to embarrass their party leaders by discussing any question which their leaders do not sanction, or by even criticising anything they do or omit to do. Party men and politicians outside Parliament follow the same cue, and encourage the members in silent discipline. The journalists and publicists usually have their party side, and make it a point of honour to stir no awkward topic, but with their whole

¹ “Popular Government,” pp. 98, 99, 100.

force to support the party side. Thus, as the whole political energy of our day runs into parliamentary channels and is organised with military discipline to secure party victories (and the same thing is even more conspicuous in the United States), the free formation of public opinion is almost as difficult as under the despotism of a Czar or a Napoleon.”¹

Now the position that the existence of party is essential to healthy parliamentary government does not seem to us to be at all a strong position. And if we can disprove the necessary connection between the existence of popular government and the organisation of parties in the State, we shall have disposed of the only reason which seems to be urged for an institution which it is admitted on all hands has little else to recommend it, and has innumerable features, as these writers have shown, which discredit it.

We have pointed out that at one time, when great dynastic and other questions important to the very life of the nation were in the arena of politics, there was a reason for parties in politics. No doubt civil war can only be carried on by means of parties, but it does not therefore follow that government can only be carried on by a sort of smothered civil war. In our time, were it not that party is a means of raising the temperature of lukewarm enthusiasm²—were it not that the war of parties is a foolish survival of primitive savagery which serves the purpose of the few ambitious men who are able to make themselves the leaders of these factions, we are convinced that parties would cease to exist. No doubt when civil

¹ “The Radical Programme.” *The Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1886, p. 275.

² “The power of party,” says a writer in an old number of the *British Quarterly Review*, “owes perhaps as much to the passions of both leaders and followers as it does to their convictions.”

war was in question the currents of thought might be well compared to two main streams. They were like rivers which made their own ways through the obstructions of the land. Now, however, party thought is like a watercourse which is made to flow in a certain direction, like a canal, by the artificial banks and locks of party discipline. As it is, as we have tried to show, the interests of the country, the interests of the rank-and-file of politicians, are sacrificed to the ambition of their leaders in much the same way as the common people and the soldiery used to be sacrificed to the pride of kings. It is for this purpose, then, that the irrational distinctions between the two parties is maintained. We constantly, in this foolish warfare, hear of tactics, of manœuvres, of party moves, and one leader is proud of the appellation "old parliamentary hand"; and while most of these tricks and tactics are turned against the opposite party, the greatest dupes of all are the parties themselves. The ordinary politician toils years in the vain hope of rising to a position in which he will merit the rewards which it is in the power of party to bestow, and only a few of them ever have the loaves and the fishes which are the end and aim of what by a fine irony is called practical politics. The principle which we have stated as being the ethical foundation of parties—namely, that men may honestly sacrifice minor matters of principle for the sake of party—seems to us to be immoral. We have said that great danger may justify the losing sight of individual opinion. On a battlefield private judgment must be at a minimum. But why in these times we should still keep up this semblance of war in order to make these sacrifices a necessity it is difficult to see. The trick by means of which the juggle of parties is constantly played is that men magnify the points of difference between themselves and their fellows, and shut their eyes to the far more important

points of agreement—a process which is dishonest to your antagonist and unfair to yourself. But further, on this matter of sacrificing minor matters of principle at the high behests of party interest, is it not difficult to say where such a process, once inaugurated, is to stop? The advocates of the system say in “small matters,” in “minor matters,” a man may sacrifice his principles for the sake of the organisation. But there is an indefiniteness about this rule which gives spacious latitude to ambitious consciences. It is very dangerous to begin paltering, and when a man has given in the mint and the anise and the cummin for the sake of party, and for the hopes that adhesion to party rear in men’s minds, he may easily enough be induced to sacrifice more weighty matters. Where there is room for a conscience in party spirit most candid people have failed to see. But then it is said you cannot work your representative and democratic institutions unless you are willing to put up with these inconveniences. That, as we have seen, is the position which the advocates of party government take up. Well, in the first instance, it is not the highest praise which can be bestowed upon popular government that it can only be worked by means of this immoral and foolish machinery. We should have thought that the country could have been governed by the calm wisdom and prudence of the country, and that it was unnecessary to call in the aid of the passions of the prize-ring. But is the assertion true? In the first place, has the experiment ever been made to do away with parties and to see how representative institutions would work without them? In the absence of any such experience, we are entitled to question the truth of the assertion which is made with such confidence. Who will say that it is impossible for our parliamentary system to be worked without this struggle for office when no such system exists in connection with any

of the State departments? Do they not do their business? Is it necessary to have as many clerks again waiting outside the Treasury to trip up those within the Treasury with the view of getting their places? No. Then, why should the First Lord and all the Junior Lords do their work better for having the duties only for a short time, and holding their posts at the mercy of an adverse vote in the House of Commons upon any question, whether it has any relation to the Treasury or not? We think that this snarling and counter-snarling which is called debate, this division of the spoils, this "strife for freedom, where," as Carlyle put it, "every one may get a share of what is going," is quite unnecessary. Let us see. Only the other day a Ministry was defeated on a hostile division as to allotments. The moment of defeat was one of the most inopportune which could well have been chosen. No doubt there were important questions as to home policy to be decided, but one of the least urgently important was that upon which the Government fell by the combined vote of the Radical and Parnellite members. But at the instant there were other important matters on the carpet. Affairs in South-Eastern Europe were, as we have said, in a critical condition. The one man—we say it without any wish to disparage his able successor—that the country desired to be at the Foreign Office at the time was Lord Salisbury. But because there was nothing definite about three acres and a cow in the Queen's Speech, he had to go and all his Government with him. This is an illustration of the suicide or mutilation which the country is constantly inflicting on itself for the sake of party government. For the sake of that system we keep up a curious fiction, and that is, that the Ministers of the Crown, who are in a true sense the Ministers or servants of the country, are the masters of the House

of Commons.¹ Whenever they fail to enforce these views upon the representatives of the people, they give place to others who can. Now the true theory is that the Ministers are there to carry out the wishes of the House of Commons—of the country through their representatives; and if that theory were acted upon there would be no necessity for a Ministerial crisis whenever the Ministers were in a minority. At present it does not matter how well some members of a Ministry may have discharged their duties, it is of no consequence even if they are in accord with the feelings of the majority in the House of Commons—they must go with the rest, and leave the spoils to the conquerors. Why? Why, when a good man has gone into an office where he can do good work, should he leave it so long as he does the work well?² Why should not the Ministers, regardless of party considerations, hold the offices they are best suited for, and carry out the intentions and wishes of the House of Commons? But it may be said, no Minister could stay in an office if he was only to be the tool of the House of Commons. Is that so? Are not the permanent staff in every department the tools of their chief, and are they not in fact the tools of the House of Commons at the present time?

¹ "No one can justify," says Mr. Justice Stephen, "though he may explain upon historical grounds, an arrangement by which the whole government of the country is vested in a popular assembly like the House of Commons, ruling as a king through a committee, which may be dismissed at a moment's notice" (p. 263). As to the autocracy of the House of Commons, see Frederic Harrison's article on the Radical Programme.

² It seems to us a serious mistake to suppose that the functions of a ruler can be lightly discharged, or that the art of government is an easy art; of all the arts it is, in our opinion, the most difficult. It is not a matter which can be taken up easily. There is no more delicate matter falls to be executed by human ingenuity and courage. We are confirmed in this view by such a sagacious observer as Mr. Justice Stephen. "I should add," he says, "to this that the work of governing a great nation, if it is to be done really well, requires an immense amount of special knowledge, and the steady, restrained, and calm exertion of a great variety of the very best talents which are to be found in it."—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," p. 262.

—the only difference being that, whenever the will of the House has to be carried out, another man has to be found to do it, to the immense detriment of the public service. But let us say that if a really experienced Minister were at the head of one of the great departments of the State, he would very seldom be checked in the administration of his department by the representative assembly. The fact that he was a permanent official would give his opinions and recommendations double the weight which attaches to those of the amateurs in office who hop in and out. But how, it may be asked, would you procure the men who are to fill his office when he passed away? A time will come when your model Minister will no longer be at the “helm,” or the “spigot of taxation,” as Carlyle called it; who is to succeed him? Under the present system there are always men ready to fill any of the offices which may become vacant. Now that is true. But how are these offices filled? By some one who has no knowledge of the working of the department—by some one who has shown his fitness for the office by making smart parliamentary speeches, or by showing himself a cunning hand at the tact which, according to Emerson,

“Clinches the bargain,
Sails out of the bay,
Gets the vote in the Senate
Spite of Webster and Clay.”¹

¹ That this is not invented for the occasion of the illustration, but has been obvious to all candid observers, must be known to most, even careless students. Thus, to quote from a novel of a hundred years ago: “We want some man of acknowledged eminence to point our counsels with that firmness which the counsels of a great nation require. We have hundreds of Ministers who press forward into office without having once learned that art which is necessary for every business—the art of thinking; and mistake the petulance which could give inspiration to smart sarcasms on an obnoxious measure in a popular assembly for the ability which is to balance the interest of kingdoms and investigate the latent sources of national superiority.” This is from that old-world book, Mackenzie’s “Man of Feeling.”

It is for this he is chosen to preside over the interests of our army and navy. It is these qualities which commend to his hands the Foreign or Colonial policy of this great country. Under the system of permanent government, on the other hand, the veteran statesman would be succeeded by one who had specially prepared himself for the particular duties of the office. Then men would prepare themselves by a real knowledge of the affairs to be dealt with, instead of, as at present, they prepare themselves by the invention of a "caucus," the claptrap of the platform, or the organisation of the party. Then we should have a chance of seeing the country wisely governed by those who were wisest, instead of in the hands of the wire-pullers as at present. Upon this last point let us quote again from Sir Henry Maine's book :—

"It is through this great natural tendency to take sides that the wire-puller works. Without it he would be powerless. His business is to fan its flame ; to keep it constantly acting upon the man who has once declared himself a partisan, to make escape from it difficult and distasteful. His act is that of the Nonconformist preacher who gave importance to a body of common-place religionists by persuading them to wear a uniform and take a military title, or of the man who makes the success of a temperance society by prevailing on its members to wear always and openly a blue ribbon. In the long run, these contrivances cannot be confined to any one party, and their effects on all parties and their leaders, and on the whole ruling democracy, must be in the highest degree serious and lasting. The first of these effects will be, I think, to make all parties very like one another, and indeed in the end almost indistinguishable, however leaders may quarrel and partisan hate partisan. In the next place, each party will probably become more and more homogeneous, and the opinions

it professes, and the policy which is the outcome of those opinions, will less and less reflect the individual mind of any leader, but only the ideas which seem to that mind to be most likely to win favour with the greatest number of supporters. Lastly, the wire-pulling system, when fully developed, will infallibly lead to the constant enlargement of the area of suffrage.”¹

Surely the fact that so much in English political life depends upon these party organisations and upon these captains of votes, the wire-pullers, is sufficient of itself to condemn the system and to recommend that which we are here urging as a substitute—the government of the country by the best men, irrespective of party considerations, the permanent tenure of all the great offices during efficiency and good behaviour, and the obedience of the Ministers of the Crown to the expressed wishes of the representatives of the people. Against this system we do not know any reasons of any cogency which can be urged. That there would be less “sound and fury” in politics is one of the recommendations of the system—all the “sound and fury” at present signify nothing; that there would be less enthusiasm brought to bear upon national affairs may be true, but the enthusiasm which arises in politics in consequence of the war of parties, is like that which is produced on religion by persecution. We may buy our enthusiasm too dear. But to say that there would not remain enough of interest in national affairs to induce the best men to take part in them is, we think, untrue and libellous. While there is great work to be done—and the good government of a country like ours is great work—there will not be wanting the great men to do it. But the party strife, with its chicanery and cunning, which form such a large part of party warfare, is a means of keeping some of the best men of the country apart from the

¹ Maine's “Popular Government,” pp. 32, 33. See also p. 237.

work of governing altogether. It is well known that there are many especially able men in America who already keep themselves apart from the din and bustle of politics. The proportion of persons who do not aspire to honour by the road which leads through St. Stephen's is in this country every year becoming greater. That these men would be attracted to the services of the State if they were no longer the reward of party tactics, but were the recognition of special capacity and practical experience, we think none can doubt. Indeed, the objections to the one system are so many, and the objections to the other so few, that it is almost like weakness to argue the matter. It is in deference, not to the reasons which can be urged for government by party, that we have said so much, but because we are aware of the long roots which the system has struck into the national life, and of the firm hold it has over the minds of contemporary politicians.

X

THE COMING SOCIAL REVOLUTION

WE have our revolutions, but we have them quietly. When the victim up the tree knows who is going to shoot, it throws up the sponge (which is a mixed metaphor) and says, "Don't shoot, I'll come down." And so it is with our feudal or patriarchal Government; it "has come down," and we are now governed by a middle-class democracy, the bourgeoisie. But now we hear that individualism is doomed, that "capital is the enemy" aimed at, and will have to come down and give in to Socialism. It was common at one time to speak of Socialism and Communism as the red terror, and it is true that the methods of those who were furthering the idea at that time waded in blood. The object of Socialism could only be attained by means of revolution, and the type of the drastic evolution of the future was to be found in the uprising and down-pulling of France at the end of the eighteenth century. It is not to be wondered at that weak knees kissed each other for support, and that lily-livered folk were blanched as to their faces when the massive foot of Socialism was heard on the path of history. Even a poet spoke of "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." But although that was the method of early Socialism it is all changed now. The avowed object of Socialism—although it is not the real object of all those who profess to be Socialists—is the improvement of the condition of the people. Many persons have got it into their heads that all wealth is produced by labour,

and that, therefore, to labour all wealth belongs. It is a pretty fallacy, and, as many are quite certain of the truth of that seductive doctrine, they hold that all private property is theft; and although they are far too wise to ignore the importance of capital as a means to the equipment of labour, they desire to see all capital in the public hands. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, when, in June, he assured the French Socialists in the name of the English Labour members that "capital, that is our enemy," knew quite well that he was sacrificing truth for the purpose of his epigram. It is not capital—but capital in private pockets, as distinguished from capital in the coffers of the State—that is the enemy of Socialism. And those who profess that doctrine desire to see the transfer from the individual's hands of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and think that that transfer would improve the condition of the labouring classes. According to them the present system, which allows property to be private in the hands of individuals, allows the capitalist class to levy heavy taxes upon the producers of all wealth or value—the workmen. The rich at present hold the poor to ransom. "If you will not work on my terms," they say, "you shall not have roof to cover you, or machinery to manufacture with, or land to till, and you will inevitably perish of hunger." "And what are your terms?" asked the abject labour of the past. "My terms," said capital, with fine urbanity, "are that if you work you shall eat. I will give you enough to keep body and soul together; nay, more, for we must look to the future—I will give you enough to keep a wife and to rear a family; but all the rest of the wealth that you produce by your labour is to belong to me." This was the bargain with which labour had to close, on pain of death.

It was against this system that the intelligence of the early Socialists rebelled, and their aim was to bring about a revolution which would break up the crushing

tyranny of capital—an earthquake which would level the oppressive mountains of wealth, and bring about an equality which would improve the condition of the proletariat. That, indeed, is the aim and object of Socialism and Labourism to-day ; but its methods of attaining its end are entirely different from those of the early leaders of the movement, and are likely to be much more effective. These methods, as we shall see, are operating in our midst to-day.

Marx and Blanqui thought that the way to the realisation of the State-ownership of property—which according to them was to be the new heaven and new earth of their dream—was through a proletariat revolution which was to be grafted on a bourgeois revolution. The bourgeoisie was to be the jackal for the lion of the proletariat. They had no confidence in the strength of the proletariat to accomplish a revolution from start to finish. Indeed, they thought that the revolution which was to place labour in power was to be on the same lines as the earlier failure revolutions ; but the bourgeoisie was only to be the cat's-paw to get the hot chestnuts out of the fire of revolution, the gains of the social convulsion were to be appropriated by the proletariat. This was their hope, this their programme.

“In Germany [Marx and Engels wrote in 1847] the Communist party will fight along with the bourgeoisie whenever it takes up its revolutionary rôle again ; it will join with it in combating absolute monarchy, feudal ownership of land, and the lower middle-class. But it will never forget for a single instant to rouse among the workers the clearest possible consciousness of the antagonism that exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and makes them enemies. The social and political conditions that will accompany the triumph of the bourgeoisie are so many weapons which the German workman will know how to turn against the bourgeoisie

itself after the downfall of the reactionary classes. The fight against the bourgeoisie must be begun without delay."

But although these were the ideas in 1847, all that is changed to-day. More prudent, more insidious counsels have prevailed. Socialists now desire a quiet not a noisy revolution, a revolution in the name of law, rather than in the name of "red ruin." The ideal, for instance, of Jean Jaurès is "the revolution that will be embodied in things, in laws, and in our hearts, not in formulas and words, and it would free the great work of the proletarian revolution from the sickening odour of blood, of murder, and of hate which still clings to the bourgeoisie revolution." Jaurès desires to attain the same end, but he proposes to use constitutional means. Votes have more force than dynamite.¹ He is quite frank indeed, and admits that all violent means employed by the proletariat would in result "only unite against it all the non-proletariat forces," and as the old revolutionary methods of fire and sword have failed when the forces of order were shoulder to shoulder, he proposes the new method of revolution which is indeed in full swing. They are determined to bring about their own revolution by "the gradual and legal conquest of the power of production and of the power of the State," and in another place he says, "we have in the legal conquest of the democracy the sovereign method of revolution."

Jaurès, in another of his "Studies in Socialism," deprecates even a "general strike," as a means for the furtherance of Socialism. He regards it as a preliminary to a violent revolution, which would probably fail, and lead to years of repression of the proletariat. Here also he favours the gradual realisation of Socialism by

¹ Or, as Mr. Tregear, the Secretary of the Department of Labour of New Zealand, puts it, "the ballot-box is the only social weapon."

the organised efforts of the proletariat, by the "legal conquests of the majority."

The Socialism of Germany is run on similar lines. Liebknecht, in answering the question what measures ought the Socialist party to adopt in the near future, said: "It goes without saying that the steps to be taken depend essentially on the circumstances under which the Socialist party has obtained an appreciable influence on legislation;" and he goes on to anticipate that in Germany his party might be called upon "to govern, or at least to share in the government." After showing how an unsuccessful war or widespread discontent might weaken the hands of "the ruling system" to the verge of paralysis, he added:—

"We may even imagine, though we can scarcely count on it, that the danger will be understood by those in the upper circles, and that they will attempt to avert the catastrophe, otherwise inevitable, by introducing intelligent reforms. In this case our party will be necessarily asked to participate in the Government, and will be called upon especially to reform the conditions of labour."

That the Socialist party would obtain partial control of the Government, even under the Imperial *régime*, he foresaw, and he was ready, in the interest of the proletariat, to become, if necessary, a Minister of the Kaiser. This then is the method of Socialism in our days. We have no longer to contemplate the imminence of bloodshed; we have only to recognise the gradual conquest, by means of the labour vote, of Parliament, and, by means of legislation, of the individualist and the capitalists' position. But this is no distant prospect; it is going on, and it is this new aspect of Socialism that we have to consider to-day. This constitutional revolution is being realised. We know that M. Millerand has been

a Minister of France ; we know that Mr. John Burns is President of the Local Government Board. We see how the Labour party in Germany has been growing in power, notwithstanding the attempts to buy off their onward progress by the "intelligent reforms" foreshadowed by Liebknecht, by the passing of the Insurance Laws in 1883, 1884, and 1891. In 1877 the Socialists had twelve representatives in the Reichstag, in 1890 they had thirty-seven, in 1894 they had forty-six, in 1898 they had fifty-six, and in 1903 eighty-three. In 1887 they polled 437,438 votes for the Reichstag, in 1898, 2,120,000, and in 1903, 3,010,771. But we see too that in this country the Labour party is a party in being. In former Parliaments the Labour members were interesting exceptions, to-day they abound ; and the history of the last session shows that they are to a large extent dominating our House of Commons, although as yet they have only some fifty representatives within its walls. Nothing is more remarkable than the way they have modified and dictated the policy and measures of their allies the Liberal party. At the elections, as we know, the Liberals were only too pleased to have the Labour vote, and in many instances the Liberals succeeded where otherwise they would have failed, in consequence of proletarian support. But it is the history of the old fable repeating itself. The horse sought the assistance of man against his enemy—let us say, mending the fable—the ass, and to succeed in the campaign he had to allow man to mount on his back. When the war was over and the horse's enemies had been routed, man refused to dismount, and has ruled his ally ever since. The Labour party is in the saddle, and although politicians of the type of Mr. Winston Churchill show some restiveness after a Cockermouth election, the Liberal party will find it very difficult, with all its buck-jumping, to unseat the Socialists. It is significant of the situation that the Master of Elibank, a member of the Govern-

ment, speaking with the experience of a Whip, has intimated that the Liberal party may be forced to embark on a crusade against Socialism, and Mr. Haldane, speaking on the 5th of October, said : " If in the name of Labour Mr. Keir Hardie or anybody else brought forward abstract propositions which conflicted with Liberal principles, if he wanted to nationalise land or capital or anything else, the Liberal party would cross swords with him." This is vague and gentle threatening. How Labourism must laugh at a crusade undertaken by a Government pledged to the principle of old age pensions, State-aid to the unemployed, payment of members, and which has in hand the Trades Disputes Bill, the Provision of Meals for Children Bill, and the Land Tenure Bill. They crusade too late.

Under these circumstances it is worth while examining the principles of Socialism or Labourism, and considering the prospects of the country in the event of the achievement of the quiet revolution of the workmen of the country which is now hatching. " We are all Socialists now," said Sir William Harcourt in 1888, meaning that we are all willing to concede certain social reforms ; or in Liebknecht's words, in fear of worse things befalling us, are introducing " intelligent reforms." But this Socialism of the Conservative and Liberal parties is the gain of the Labour party. Both the great constitutional parties of the State had been playing the game of the proletariat.

For a time we were in favour of regulating our institutions in the interests of the people, but that policy is a failure. Not long ago, at the instance of the London County Council, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole question of London water supply. Lord Llandaff was chairman. One of the important questions inquired into by that Commission was whether there should be " control " of the water companies in the interests of the public, or

purchase of their undertakings. That Commission reported in favour of purchase; and now, as we know, the whole of the water supply of London is in the hands of a representative Water Board. That is only an illustration of the adoption of "ownership" as the remedy, instead of control or regulation. We know, of course, that the Post Office, the Telegraphs, and the Post Office Savings Banks are now in the hands of the Government, and that the Telephone will shortly pass over into the hands of the State. There was no thought that we were furthering Socialism when we took these steps in the direction of State-ownership. There is not in the minds of a great many Liberals and Conservatives who advocate the purchase of the railways by the State to-day an idea that they are advancing the revolution. But they are, and the Labour leaders know it. A large number of politicians, influenced by the traders of the country, are of opinion that the regulation of railways by means of the Board of Trade and the Railway Commission has been a complete failure, and that the next "intelligent reforms" to be introduced into this country is the acquisition of these important means of distribution by the State. Already, as long ago as 1865, a Royal Commission, presided over by Mr. Monsell (afterwards Lord Emly), reported in favour of the immediate purchase of the Irish railways, and since that time large sums have been expended in Ireland out of the public purse on the construction of light railways. Before long then we shall see this leaf out of the Socialist's programme-book become a page in the Statute-book. But we may note the same tendency in every direction, and in the past the two constitutional parties have vied with one another as to which was to do the most for the people in the way of social reform.

There is not at the present time a single water company supplying water in Scotland, and private enterprise in that direction only exists in two of the

great towns of England—Bristol and Newcastle. Gas is to a very large extent supplied by public authorities. The supply of electricity is also a municipal function, and a Committee of the House of Commons last session, while rejecting the London County Council Electric Power Supply Bill then before them, recommended that the County Council should introduce another and more comprehensive scheme, although the Bill was one to authorise the sale of electricity for power purposes to authorised distributors, railways, docks, and the like on obvious extensions of the functions of a public body. But it is not necessary to illustrate the trend of legislation further. Everything points in the direction of the concentration of these public functions which affect large numbers of persons who are users of highways or consumers of commodities like gas and electricity in the hands either of municipalities or the State. But if we cannot leave our railways in the enterprising hands of companies, why should our ships be in their private hands? It is upon our mercantile marine that this country depends for its daily bread. A combine of shipping companies could force Britain to conclusions in a week. We have had naval manœuvres to find out whether we could defend our sea commerce from an enemy's ships in time of war. May we not have to defend ourselves against our shipowners? We have attempted some regulation of these in the public interests. But if the regulation of railways is an abortive failure, why should this be a success? Already the Otago Trades Council, in a manifesto which is interesting reading, have put the matter—so far as New Zealand is concerned—plainly enough. It says :—

“It is too late for them [employers] to object to the Government's ownership of the railways, the post and telegraph services, State coal-mines and distributing coal depots, to its conduct of State fire insurance, State life

insurance, &c. All these things, whether conducted by the State or the municipality, are Socialism—industries being conducted by the people for the benefit of the people as a whole, instead of being conducted, as is too often the case at present, for the benefit of the employer, who in too many cases gets more than a fair share of the money which is made out of the business—profit which is, to a large extent, made by his workers. But where does the consistency of the Employers' Federation, or of the opponents of State ownership, come in in upholding the Government's ownership of the railways of the Colony and objecting to its owning a steamship service? The one is carriage by land, the other carriage by water, but the principle of ownership is just the same. 'The field of private enterprise' is gradually being encroached upon year by year, as the State makes a step forward, and we intend to do our best to shift the fence further and further back."

Again, if it is important that gas or electricity or power should be supplied at the cheapest possible price, surely it is far more important that bread and beef and shoes and stockings should be sold to the public without allowing capitalists to "fleece" them for profits.

But we have only to look at the tentative Socialism of one of our Colonies to see the finger-post for our own political progress. In New Zealand the Government owns the railways, and is the largest landowner and rent receiver in the islands, possessing about two-thirds of the whole acreage. It limits the real estate that can be held by one individual, and has a right of compulsory repurchase. Colonies for the unemployed were founded by Ballance, leader of the Labour party and premier, in 1893. There is a progressive income-tax, a land tax, local option in regard to liquor, advances to settlers, one man one vote, female suffrage, an eight hours day, and a minimum wage. There is compulsory

arbitration in industrial disputes, old age pensions, "direct employment" of labour without the intervention of a contractor. The Government controls the Bank of New Zealand, is an insurance authority, appoints public trustees, and is a lawyer who does most of the conveyancing of land. In New Zealand, therefore, the State, without being an absolute monopolist, is an important and very active competitor in most of the fields of industry. But that, as we have pointed out, is tentative Socialism. No man can ultimately succeed in his competition with the State, and all such competition as is carried on with the rates and taxes behind it must in the end lead to the crushing of independent rivals. The Colony is on the direct road to Collectivism, and we in this country are following in its footsteps. Many of the measures which are on the horizon of practical politics here have been put upon the Statute-book there, and the Labour party here mean to use the Liberal party to carry out these reforms, which are all pointing one way, in the direction of Socialism.¹

¹ Since the above was written an important article on "Labour Politics in New Zealand," and a leader founded on the article, have appeared in the *Times* (September 1, 1906). These show, what I hinted, that the present tentative Socialism in the Colony is only a half-way house to the real thing. The Conciliation and Arbitration Act, which was to lubricate the relations between capital and labour in the Colony, has broken down. It has, as was to be expected, been popular with workmen while New Zealand was "booming," and the judge had to raise wages only. It would have been abolished long ago if it had worked the sliding scale so as to reduce wages. But it has too, of course, seriously increased the cost of production, and led to the importation of more articles competing with colonial industries. But now the Act is being condemned, not merely by employers, but by workmen, and as the writer of the article says, there is a tendency for "the Labour party to break away from the party in power, and to assert in a more aggressive manner than formerly the claims of labour." That that is true is seen from the quotation already given from the Memorial of the Otago Trades Council, and is written large in Mr. Tregear's letter to Mr. Benton, which, although a private letter, had been made public. That gentleman is a high State official, Secretary to the Department of Labour, and this is how he writes: "Here we keep pegging away, sapping little by little the foundations of one

Mr. Keir Hardie, speaking on August 25 to the National Union of Dock Labourers, took up a frankly Socialistic position. He said: "The great fight of the future was going to be fought out on the floor of the House of Commons. They do not want the old strikes and the old lock-outs to continue, during which the rich employers were able to sit quietly at home while the working-men and their families were starved into submission." What he wanted was a strong Labour party in the House, "who would be able to compel the employer class and the landlord class to take their hands off the life of the nation." Landlordism had according to him "been a curse all the time and always, and they would have to get rid of it." It is quite time, my Master of Elibank, that you began your crusade! Quite time! If I am not mistaken, it is too late.

We are all, if not Socialists as Sir William Harcourt said, opportunists in politics to-day, and "the opportunist" has been defined as a man "who has to do the best he can under the circumstances." But that policy lends itself to the advance along the road which the Labour leaders desire legislation to follow. "The spirit of opportunism," said a writer in the *Fortnightly Review*, "is not confined to statesmen and diplomatists, and there are workmen who are shrewd enough to see that the wealthy classes will do much for fear, and little for the love of their poorer brethren." This concession

monstrous privilege after another. We got arbitration upon its sturdy legs, and I know you have followed its career with interested eyes. Now we have again a crusade against the landlords in cities and suburbs, because every advantage in wages, &c., gained by the workers by arbitration is being exploited and neutralised by robber rents. . . . We have barely touched the fringe of the soiled economic garment. So long as the wage system endures, so long as capital holds the land, machinery, and other means of production, so long is the bulk of our population only a collection of well-fed, well-clothed slaves." It is obvious, therefore, that this tentative bud of Socialism is about to become the full-blown rose in New Zealand, where a State official can speak of the owner of capital as "the robber," and the working-man as "his victim."

at the sword's point is the hope of the Labour party. The revolution is not to draw blood, but to threaten ; and already we have seen this new party, this growing power, making its voice heard by constitutional means, and putting its indelible mark on the Statute-book of Britain. But this policy of opportunism under fear may lead us too far, and it is worth while inquiring as to the road that lies before us, and as to the probable consequences of this new revolution which both the Liberal and the Unionist party are doing their unconscious best to further. What is Socialism, and what will it do for us ?

The aim of Socialism is simple, and M. Jaurès says, it is "noble." According to the Labour party, as we have seen, all value is produced by work, and therefore all property belongs to the workmen, and they are about to re-possess themselves of their property not by the clutch of red revolution, but by the transfer of constitutional taxation. At the present time they say, owing to the capitalist laws, laws made by capitalism after it ascended the throne of feudalism, property is held in private hands, and society is divided into two great classes : the one that earns—the proletariat—and the other that by virtue of ownership taxes the workers. Socialism, as we have seen, is no longer a war against capital, for it recognises that no work can be done without an expensive equipment. Before we can put the poor to work we must have raw material, we must have the machinery which with the help of labour is to produce the finished article ; but it is a war against the holding of capital in private hands, and the payment of profits to those who hold the capital, instead of to the State which ought to hold the capital. Take a simple illustration. If a Gas Company exists in a town, it supplies gas to those who require that kind of illuminant, and the persons who use the gas are benefited thereby, for the company can produce and sell gas

much more cheaply than the individuals could supply themselves. But the company spends its money not to benefit the consumer, but to secure what is called a return on its capital. In the case of a non-statutory company supplying gas the profits of the company are unlimited; but the State has, in its attempt to use the monopolist corporation for the benefit of the people, put statutory companies under various restrictions in return for the statutory privilege conceded to the company of breaking up the public streets and roads. One of these restrictions has been on the amount of profit which the company might divide, or in other words, a restriction as to the amount of money it might exact from the consumer of gas. In the old days Parliament used to allow companies to divide 10 per cent. on the invested capital amongst their shareholders; more recently they have limited the profits to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and 7 per cent.; and nowadays companies are compelled to raise new capital by means of what are called "the auction clauses," which is an expedient by which the capital is to be raised at the cheapest possible rate, so that the public may have the gas at the lowest possible figure. But it is evident that there must still be a resulting profit to the shareholders, otherwise they would cease to carry on the undertaking. This profit comes out of the pockets of the consumers of gas, and is regarded by the Socialists in the light of a tax. One thing is certain, and that is that if the capital for the enterprise had been raised by the municipal corporation of the town, and the undertaking had been carried on as efficiently in the hands of the corporation as in the hands of the company, the profits resulting from the manufacture and distribution of gas might have gone into the public purse and been applied by the town to the reduction of rates, or they might have been given to the consumers of gas by reduction of the price of gas. In either of these events the public would have been the

gainers, and the only losers would have been the shareholders in the company, who would not have found a profitable investment for their money.

Now a precisely similar course of reasoning is applicable to any private ownership. Presumably a man holds land in order that he may receive the profits. A manufactory is erected with a view to gain ; a railway is made by shareholders in order that they may reap a harvest of profit. Ships are sailed, banks established, with the same object in view. Now if all these enterprises are profitable in the hands of private enterprise, it is obvious that the gains of such undertakings find their way into private pockets, and come out of the pockets of the public who use the land, who buy the manufactured article, who travel on the railway, who pay the freight, or who borrow from the bank. The desire of the Labourist is that all these profits should find their way into the public purse, and be disbursed for the benefit of the public. The foundation of this claim to appropriate all these means of production, distribution, and exchange is that the profits have not been created by the capitalist, but by the workmen, and consequently they belong to labour and not to wealth.

But the argument goes further. It is pointed out that the tax which is levied every year by the landowner in the form of rent for farms, or ground-rent for "stands" in cities, the interest on the public debt, the profits upon such enterprises as those we have referred to, as they have to be paid by the people, have to be in the first instance earned by the people, and that this system is equivalent to the *corvée*, for the workman has to work about one-third of his whole time for himself and his family, and about two-thirds of his whole time to pay these taxes to the rich. It is true that the workman would even in the case of a Collectivist State have to toil a portion of his time to pay rent, but the rent would go to the State, and, therefore, belong to him. He

might have to work to pay interest on the public debt, but it would be a debt that had been incurred by him, and not, as our existing debt is, a debt incurred by capitalists in the interests of capital. He might have to labour to replace machinery, and even to pay a sinking fund; but the machinery would be his own, and he and his class would be the beneficiaries when the sinking fund had paid off the capital cost of the establishment. In this way, it is argued that under the present system the wage earner is not his own property. For two-thirds of his time he is a slave, labouring not for himself but for others, and Socialism is to emancipate him and let men in future own their own bodies and souls. This is a thin sketch of the "noble" creed of Socialism, and it is founded on some obvious fallacies; which, however, will not prevent its realisation, for the power is in the hands of the proletariat, and our politicians are puppets, and voters pull the strings.

The economic fallacy of Socialism is, that all value is produced by labour. The greater part of value is produced by the bounty of Nature; we have our raw materials, our iron, our coal, our fruits, and the increase of our flocks and herds given to us with liberal hand. It is quite true that the mining of the iron and coal is by human labour, the planting of the seeds, the reaping of the harvest is the work of men's hands. But there are other bounties besides the bounty of the earth, there is the bounty of the brain and the bounty of character. It is to the bounty of the brain that we owe our knowledge of the uses to which the minerals can be put; it is to intelligence that we owe it that we know when to sow and when to reap; it is to genius that we owe the implements with which we excavate our mines, or plough the earth, or weave our cloth, or sail the sea; and therefore it is human brains as well as human muscles which have created values. But the values that are produced are due, at any rate in part, to machinery,

and the machinery is not the result merely of the genius of the inventor, but that it exists at all is due to the thrift of those who, having earned wages by their labour, accumulated capital. It is thrift then that I call the bounty of character, and it is a colleague in creating value. But there are various kinds of labour besides that of the muscles upon which the Socialists lay such stress, which go to the production of the finished article. It suits the labourers to regard "labour" as merely manual labour, and to regard all the rest of the work of the world as "fleecing" by parasitic classes. A man who lays bricks or makes shoes, who looks after a lathe,—that is their idea of the labourer. Those who administer the laws, and make honest dealing possible, those who cure the workman's diseases, and make it possible for him to go to the mill, those who minister to his pleasure in leisure times,—these are put down as "non-producers," because they do not directly manufacture an article having a value in exchange. But now leaving this foolishness on one side, are there not those who more directly contribute to production to whom some of the fruits of labour belong? The capitalist has not only lent labour money for the means of production, he has organised his army of workers. He is the main-spring of the various human wheels in his manufactory, and as such he is entitled to his wage as much as the workman who weaves a web, drives a van to the station, or shunts a truck in the yard. I have never heard of a battle being won without some wise generalship. But even if it were true that all value was created by labour, then it is equally obvious that capital only represents past labour, and has as much right to protection as present labour. As we have pointed out, labour to produce an article of value must be equipped, it must have raw materials, it must have tools, and in obtaining these it only pays for past labour, or in other words remunerates capital which paid the wages of those who

brought the raw materials or made the machinery. But if all capital is the accumulation of past labour, then it would be wrong for present labour to take the whole fruits of past labour without paying for them. That would be "corbies" picking out "corbies'" eyes with a vengeance. Indeed, if there can be such a crime, this would be theft. But like all theft it would not only be wicked, it would be impolitic. Who will forego a pleasure in order to accumulate capital for the future needs of labour if he is to have no security from the thieving hands of a Collectivist State? Suppose all the capitalist centuries had spent all they had made on self-indulgent pleasures, where should we be to-day? We should be in penury and squalor, and we should have to pinch and screw in order to accumulate capital before we could work or live. The labourer must have a meal before he can do his day's work—that meal was capital. It is possible that that meal was the product of the worker's labour of yesterday. But suppose it was the product of the labourer's father's work of yesterday. Here we have rampant capitalism, against which Socialism has set its foolish face. I have, we will say, laboured yesterday and the day before, and have by my thrift saved and accumulated food for another day, which I call my private property even under a Co-operative Commonwealth. Suppose I desire to have a holiday, and I give what I have earned to another worker who labours for me to-morrow. What has happened? I, the capitalist, have made a wage slave of my fellow, I am "fleecing" the man who does my work. I am a parasite. I am—for the day at least—one of the class against whom the proletariat are to rise and protest.

But, again, what is "ownership," that it is moral in the case of a State and immoral in the case of an individual? As we understand ownership, it is a right to use, and that, too, in a very limited sense. If I have pearls I can wear them, or sell them and give another

the right to use them in the same way. If I have land I have a right to use it, or to sell it or let it, and so give another person a permanent (as permanence is reckoned in human affairs) or a temporary right to use it. But it is important to note that individual ownership must begin somewhere. The crust of bread I am gnawing is mine, and has, I suppose, ceased to be the property of the community, although since Prudhon's doctrine that "property is theft," I am not quite sure. But if not mine while I am eating it, in the process of digestion or indigestion I suppose I may claim it as "a poor thing but mine own," without an abuse of language. But where does the individual property going outwards end? The loaf is mine; I have got it presumably by my labour. But what about the field that grew the wheat—is not that mine, if I ploughed it and scattered the seed on it, until the harvest? If not, if the State has a right to walk over my field and spoil my crop, if I have not a right to harvest the corn, I will not sow the grain in the spring. But if your Collectivist State guarantees me the use of the field while it whispers with the green crop, or with the sun's help "laughs in the harvest," then this guarantee is a guarantee of private property; and whether it is guaranteed to me for a year, for a term of the rotation of crops, or for a life, or longer, is a matter of detail. Collectivism has recognised individual property, and, so far as principle is concerned, has committed suicide. There must, then, be private property at some juncture, and the whole question as to where private property is to end and social property is to begin, is a matter not of principle but of expediency; and the question of expediency must be determined, not by a decision as to whether it is capital or labour which produces and measures the value of an article, but by the consideration of what is best for the whole community.

But, as we have seen, this "noble" creed claims

that persons who earn wages are slaves, and that on this ground a man who lends another a spade, and who says to his fellow, "If you get sixpence for your labour to-day, you must give me twopence for the use of my spade," is a taxing capitalist, and must have his spade taken from him, without compensation, and made the property of the community. This man who lends the spade is evidently a capitalist of the worst type. What is he doing? He is making his fellow delve for him—the owner of the spade—for one-third of his whole time. He is reducing the man with the spade to slavery. He owns the man, or a third of him. Now, all this lends itself to inflated rhetoric, but it is nonsense. Any man or woman who does anything for any other human being may in the same sense be called a slave. A medical man gives up his whole time to his humane profession, and is paid, possibly inadequately, for his time. He is a serf, a slave; but he is also a "fleecer," for he makes others labour to produce the money that is paid to him. He is a parasite, a bloodsucker, who lives upon the earnings of others. But if a Collectivist Government were in power to-morrow, the labourers would have, out of their earnings, to pay the salaries of the Government, the salaries of paid Members of Parliament, of the whole Government establishment, including the State doctor. I do not know whether such a Government would have a fleet or an army; if not, its tenure of office would probably be short, owing to its being stamped out of existence by the rude foot of foreign aggression and conquest. But if it had ships and soldiers, the expense of these non-producers' services to the State would have to be paid out of the labour earnings of the proletariat, and to that extent, I suppose, the workmen would remain "slaves."

But in other respects, in our view, we would look in vain to a Collectivist Government for salvation. Up to the present time the progress of events has led to

liberty. To a large extent the power of privilege has become a dead-letter. It is possible that the wings of wealth may, when widespread, as in the case of Trusts and Combines, want clipping. But up to the present time the ideal of social well-being has been the maximum amount of personal freedom. The Master of Elibank has dimly understood this when he says, in somewhat curious metaphor, "that if the Liberal party did not stand on its own legs its very vitals would be consumed," and, changing his figure of speech, he added, "it would fall between two stools and disappear as an active force in British politics." That is its threatening fate, and it has brought about this imminent catastrophe by furthering the inordinate claims of labour, and by preparing the way by legislation for the tyranny of a co-operative commonwealth. For Collectivist rule would be a worse form of tyranny than any that we have suffered from in the past. It is absurd to tell me that because I should have a vote for the legislative assembly, and might be said to make my own laws, that I should by my vote influence the choice of the Ministers who would govern the country; that I should myself, through them, be governing myself, and that could not be a tyranny. Reason is not to be hoodwinked by such speciosities. That I have one vote in a constituency of 20,000 does not reconcile me to the crushing effect upon my personal liberty of a law I detest. "Behold," said Carlyle, "now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a talker in our National Palaver. What a notion of liberty!" I may not only have the inestimable privilege mentioned by Carlyle, but I may be the representative of the 20,000 electors, or say of 10,100 of the 20,000 in the National Palaver, and I may be in a minority, and vote against every Bill that is passed into law. Does that reconcile me to the measure? Is it a bit less tyranny if it goes against my conscience or my liberty if it is enacted by a majority

than if it is dictated by one man? No, it is worse for me. A revolution might get rid of the man, but what is to rid me of your Collectivist Palaver? But it may be said, that is what you have to put up with to-day. It is to some extent true, for we—both parties in the State—have been playing with the edged tool of Socialism. But every step in that direction rivets our chains more effectually, and the tyranny of a Labourist Government would be more galling than that of any Monarch or Capitalist Government known in the past. It is more than slavery when the labour of each belongs to all. To-day some of the burden of the idle falls on the rich. The unemployed are supported, the poor are fed, children are educated. Besides, there are streams of charity which water arid places. But under the Socialist *régime* the burden of all these human millstones must be round the neck of the proletariat, and with its many eyes it would see that there was no idleness, no leisure, no shirking of work; all must turn their hands to work; all must earn, as far as possible, an equal quota for the State coffers, which are to be the means of relieving all, not of endowing some. To-day there is a human relation between the master and a workman, although, of course, a great deal less in the enormous manufactories than in the smaller workshops. Capital may be a hard taskmaster, but it has some bowels of compassion; the State has none, and if it had it would be brought to book by the workers, for whom it would only be a bare trustee. In my view, we may be whipped with whips by the capitalist, but we should be scourged with scorpions by the Co-operative Commonwealth.

But there is another aspect in which Collectivism must be a failure. It is, as we have seen, the hope of great gains to the individual that induces him to take the great risks of enterprise. We see the successes of capitalist trading and forget the failures. But these

have been many, for the hope of great rewards has led capitalists to volunteer even for the "forlorn hopes" of commerce. It is well to recognise that in the past the State and municipality have not been enterprising. They have only followed in the footsteps of private endeavour, and have taken to the supply of water, of gas, of electricity and the like, only where success had been assured in private hands. But in the heaven of Collectivism there is to be no great prize for adventurers. Indeed, the Co-operative Government is to put an end to competition, which has been the spur in the sides of progress. There is to be no longer a social war; we are to be at peace, but a peace which will not produce enterprise, a peace which will produce sleep. The persons who represent the Commonwealth will be in office for a short period. They will not adventure in the public interest but play for safety, which is their own best policy if they desire to retain or regain the power of office, which will then be sought after as the sole distinction. They, it is to be remembered, are not to be rewarded by the success of a great venture; the public is to reap the expected harvest. On the other hand, if they undertake a great work and it fails, they will be incontinently punished for the failure. All this makes for caution. It is the individual, the minority, which has always been active; the majority, the proletariat, has always been passive. Thus Mr. Gronlund, the author of "The Co-operative Commonwealth," says: "The majority are always ignorant, always indolent. You cannot expect them to be anything else with their present social surroundings. They have never brought about consciously and deliberately any great social change. They have always permitted an energetic minority to accomplish that for them, and then they have always sanctioned the accomplished fact."¹ This

¹ Mr. Tregear, in the letter already referred to, says: "We have made our factories clean and pleasant places to work in, looked after the wages, the

is true of all great as well as of all social changes; but the social democracy will put an end to energetic minorities, will rule out individual genius or enterprise. There will be no incentive for a man to do more or differently from his fellows. It will be always "afternoon." There will be a maximum day as to hours of work and a minimum wage as to pay. There will be no spur of competition for lethargic sides. The Co-operative Commonwealth will be the stupid home of indolence, of ignorance, and ultimately of want. If this is to the advantage of the nation as a whole, then I for one am mistaken.

But it is in this direction that we are going, not so far as the proletariat and some of their Liberal allies are concerned, consciously, but none the less surely. It is curious to note that the Labour party has sprung into active being under a Liberal Government, and that many Liberals were helped to seats in Parliament by the Labour vote, and that the advent of the Labour Party in Parliament was hailed in the first instance with congratulations by the leaders of the portentous party which was returned to power at the General Election. The late Duke of Argyll was asked to define the fundamental principles of Liberalism, and answered that "he held that liberty (Liberalism) consists in a hatred of tyranny in all its forms, and especially in those forms which may be most dangerous in our times. . . . By tyranny [he went on to say] I mean all restraint to individual freedom in the disposal of everything that belongs to man, whether mental faculties or material possessions, which are the fruit of mind, beyond those

hours, the overtime pay, the holidays, the health of the women and children. Result—Carelessness as to the real problems; fatuous contented acquiescence in things as they are; the wage-earner, satisfied with his position, ready to consider Tregear fuming over economic matters of little importance. Only when I show them how they are being robbed does the 'pleasant afternoon' feeling give way sufficiently to take them to the ballot-box." It is in this way that revolutions are manufactured.

restraints which are absolutely essential for the maintenance of order and of law, and of such other fundamental conditions of organised societies as may from time to time emerge."

This may be thought obsolete Liberalism in these new days, and the great Liberal party may try to maintain its place of power by passing, as they seem ready to do, Socialist measures. In the last session we have seen many legislative sops thrown to the proletarian Cerberus. But we shall in the future see further excursions in the same direction. The Labourists have found out the great weapon of the "tax," and will wield it. They will not rob the rich, they will tax them, by a drastic progressive income-tax and other expedients of a like sort. They will limit the amount of property a man may deal with by will, and the rest of his savings, if any, will go to the State. This is not highway robbery—it is legislation. But what we want to know is, how many of the members of the Liberal party favour such tactics—how many hold the negative principles enunciated by the Government Whip? It will not do to play with Socialism. M. Jaurès, in one of his "Studies," says :—

"The Radicals flatter themselves that they can put a stop to this movement by promising the working-classes some reforms, and by proclaiming themselves the guardians of private property. They hope to hold a large part of the proletariat in check by a few reforming laws, expressing a sentiment of social solidarity, and by their policy of defending private property to rouse the Conservative forces, the petty bourgeoisie and the middle-classes and the small peasant proprietors, to oppose Socialism."

Although this was written of the Radicals of France, it is true too of the Radicals of England. They must make up their minds whether they are going to play the

game of the proletariat by passing Socialist measures, and so sapping their own position, or they must dissociate themselves from the Labour party and its prospective tyranny, and stand with the remnant of the Unionist party for the freedom which was their creed. It is quite certain that many Liberals, afraid of the Labour vote in their constituencies, will probably dissociate themselves from such a reaction, and will become members of the Labour party; but there are many who, if told to go and sell all, and give to the poor, would feel sad, because they have great possessions; and to some of these we cannot but think a creed which looks upon capitalism as menacingly antagonistic to Labourism, which condemns all private possession, and which holds that it is the duty of the State to find work for all, would not be an acceptable political foundation. That these can form a party by themselves I do not believe, and that their only chance of success in delaying the wheels upon that down-hill grade of Socialism is to become members with the Unionists of a great Constitutional party. In future a combined Liberal and Conservative party must try to hold its own against the Labourists. There will be an inevitable cleavage in the Liberals. Some will desire to preserve private property, like the Radicals in France; some will cling to the principles of liberty as defined by the late Duke of Argyll; while others who have played the trump card of Socialism on the platform and won the trick, will possibly proceed along the same road that New Zealand and Australia have marked out, and will bring about in this country a co-operative tyranny. I am not here condemning one set of politicians. I am condemning a want of principle in the plethoric ranks of the Government majority, and in the debilitated ranks of the Unionists. Each of these residual products is too apt to coquet with the forces which are marching to the conquest of private property through legislation. It is

high time, it seems to me, to see where the foolish policy of opportunism upon the part of the rival parties is leading us, and to note that the earnest endeavours of the Labour party are, with the assistance of these rival politics, making for its definite but deplorable goal. I am far from convinced that anything that can be done now can stop the triumphal progress of labour. I am convinced that if labour succeeds in its great enterprise of silent revolution it will be disastrous to the State and to the race. Man has been created by competition, he will be undone by the sloth of a Co-operative Commonwealth.

XI

THE UNEMPLOYED

THE poor are always with us, but not always in such numbers as have been our guests in the last four winters. Indeed, their numbers, and their calls upon us, sometimes dumb calls, for help, have been noted and heard by the not very acute eyes and ears of Parliament, and have led to their melancholy recognition on the Statute-book. They have led to remedial measures beyond those which are in the paralysed hands of the Poor Law authorities. Not only have Acts dealing with the unemployed been passed, but we have a Commission inquiring into the Poor Law, that wholesome Socialism of the times of Elizabeth; and recently we have had some newspaper discussion of the subject which has been more or less illuminating.

We may take it, I think, that no one denies that there is too much unemployment in the country to satisfy our pride, notwithstanding the exuberant statistics which are given us as to exports and imports by an exulting Board of Trade. If it was not that the number of "idle hands" amongst us is abnormally great, there would be no call for the legislative interference which we have referred to, or for the rose-water suggestion of the President of the Local Government Board that the people should be better educated. Some of our reformers in education desire that children should bring fairly full stomachs to their studies, and want the State to feed the school children. Surely it may be suggested that what the unemployed wants is work and wages, and

that as a preliminary to the technical education which is suggested as a remedy for their "clemmed" condition. I have advocated tariff reform because I thought, and still think, that by means of a war upon our tariff enemies on the Continent and elsewhere we might secure an honourable peace which would give our traders a fair field and an absence of favour, and in that way secure to them more work and better wages; and further, because I thought, and still think, that by means of a preferential agreement with our colonies we might secure to our workmen markets which might, in the absence of such commercial treaties, be lost to us and secured by our rivals. Having all along taken that view, I am glad to find that a writer in the *Times* of the 16th of August, who says he has "never been an advocate of fiscal reform, and had no idea, when he began to examine the facts, that they would lead to this conclusion," has after a careful examination of the problem of the "unemployed" come to the important confirmatory conclusion that "the root cause of this change in the occupations of the people, with its consequences, is the system of free imports, which foster trade and transport, combined with restricted foreign markets, which discourage productive industry."

I do not overlook the fact that the country is not alive to the necessity of reform in this direction. Its prosperity has persuaded it to the belief that as we have in the last quarter of a century prospered under a system of so-called Free Trade, there is no necessity for any change in our economic policy. But although trade is prosperous, there are symptoms that all is not well with the body politic, and it is essential that all wise politicians, who are in a sense State physicians, should note the symptoms, and if possible suggest the remedy. This fact of the want of work is one of the most important symptoms.

The social question is, how is the bad condition of

the workman to be made better? And the Socialists in this and other countries have set themselves to answer that question by the proposal to abolish the private ownership of property, and the substitution for that harsh system of State ownership of all lands, of all factories, of all banks, and of all railways, or, in other words, the collective ownership of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Depression in trade is, and always has been, the Socialist's opportunity. Marx thought that Socialism was to be realised by a revolution somewhat on the lines of the French Revolution of 1793. Liebknecht says: "This may come as the result of an unsuccessful war, of an outburst of discontent which the ruling system will no longer be able to suppress." No one will deny that the want of work leads to discontent, and that the number of workmen who cannot find employment raises the social question in an acute and urgent form at the present time; and it is not to be gainsaid that some of the remedies suggested make for the realisation of the Socialist idea. It is in this connection that the present seems a not unsuitable time to look into the question of want of employment, and to ascertain whether there is any other possible solution of the problem besides the realisation of Socialism. We must remember that our own Poor Law is frankly Socialistic, and that the advances which are being made in the direction of further Poor Law relief are a further step towards Collectivism. It will be borne in mind that there are various temporary occasions of want of work. Men may be incapable of working owing to bodily or mental infirmity. There are periods of the year when work of certain sorts cannot be done. There are temporary dislocations or depressions of trade owing to disturbances in international politics. These emergencies must be met either by the Poor Law or by the thrift of the workmen. It is these poor that we have

always with us. But it must be remembered that like putting a piece of new cloth in an old garment, which makes the rent worse, so charity or Poor Law relief unwisely administered makes the social rent more deplorable. In such circumstances the State, or the charitable, are creating a class of unemployed workmen, are weakening the invaluable springs of self-help, and are, through the army of the unemployed, creating the haggard reserve of the "unemployable."

The limits of charity and of Poor Law relief should be narrowly drawn, and the aim should be the support of the incapable, or the temporary help of those who are sufferers from want owing to some non-permanent condition, and the re-establishment of the worker after sickness, temporary depression of trade, or the like, at his work. Both public and private charity is harmful if it creates a parasitic class which hangs on the udders of the rates or the willing private purse. It is useful and good if it can tide over an emergency and can satisfy temporary hunger without injuring the character of the man it feeds.

But these problems of the limits of Poor Law relief and the limits of wise charity are well understood, and the "unemployed," in the sense in which we are using the word, is not intended to cover the legitimate objects of public or private charity, nor to cover those persons who will not work even when the opportunity is offered, but it is intended to cover those who are willing to work and who cannot find the work to do—a class which would soon lose the power of being useful members of a community in one of two ways: either by continued want of employment, or by continued wet-nursing by the State or charity. It is quite true that there are a great many idle, loafing persons who are in evidence in a demonstrating procession, but even making allowance for these—for whom the public have no sympathy—there are amongst us at the

present time a very large number of workmen who not only deserve sympathy, but require help if it can be given without detriment to the community. The important and distressing feature of the present distress is that it seems to have come to stay, and that it is with us even at a time of very considerable prosperity in the trade of the country. If this want of employment had been coincident in time with serious trade depression, the disaster to the nation would have been more calamitous, and the urgency of a remedy either in relation to fiscal reform or the realisation of Socialism would have been much greater. It is true that we have passed through some painful experiences of a like sort before. The writer in the *Times* points out that in 1885-6 distress from unemployment was wider and deeper than in recent winters, but that on that occasion summer and a reviving trade raised the country out of that slough of despond. Again, in 1895 a severe winter, associated with bad trade, brought great distress, but that "winter of discontent" passed away. But now we have had to have recourse to emergency remedies for four consecutive winters; the remedies are in the Statute-book, and Government has proposed a State grant to keep them going. The word "emergency" will have to be eliminated, for it seems that the depression is chronic, and that it does not now yield even to the magic of good trade or increasing imports and exports. The writer in question has attempted to fathom the depth of the evil by means of the plummet of statistics, and finds that, while there has been an increase in the population over ten years of age since 1881, which would lead to the conclusion that our workmen were increasing in numbers, that increase has been an increase mainly of unoccupied persons. According to him, the occupied persons have increased by 28.3 per cent., while the unoccupied have increased by 35 per cent. On further analysis, he finds that in the

twenty years under his review, occupied persons employed in productive work—that is to say, work which produces things having an exchange value—have increased 19 per cent., while occupied persons merely doing service to others—service which does not produce exchangeable commodities—has increased at the rate of 41.2 per cent. If this were an accurate statement it would be poignantly significant. We have in this country nearly forty million of men, women, and children that must be fed. The land of this country produces food-stuffs which are equal to feeding about six and a half million of our population. It follows, therefore, that we must purchase the means of subsistence for more than thirty millions in foreign markets. And we can only purchase these if we have the means of paying for them, and these means are to be earned either by the services we perform for other nations—for example, by carrying for them in our ships—or by the production of merchantable commodities by our workmen here. But is it quite accurate to take statistics, however careful, as infallible? I think the writer, although in his main conclusions he is correct, has drawn a wrong line between the classes which are producing articles of exchange and those who are merely rendering services. It is quite true that our workers in professions, or in domestic service, to take only two illustrations, are not producing in the sense he uses the word, but I gather, both from his article and from the letter of the Master of New College, Oxford, which appeared in the *Times* a day or two after the article in question, that they place vanmen and railway servants in the category of non-producers. But the cost of conveyance to market is part of the exchange value of the commodity; just as much as the wages of the overseer or manager in the manufactory are; and while, of course, much of the labour employed on railways may be connected with passenger pleasure

traffic, much of it is occupied in producing the article where it is wanted, for the last element is essential to the idea of exchangeable value, as it is obvious that anything in a place where it is not wanted has no value. But although his statistics are, in my view, open to that criticism, with his conclusions that this horrible and paramount phenomenon of want of work is due to economic causes which are not temporary in their action but are permanently with us—causes which might, by wise legislation, be mitigated or removed—I am in eager agreement. That there is less employment in the country for skilled produce, and more for unskilled service labour, is certain, and that that is due to the fact that we have determined to buy in the cheapest market, whether that market be a home or a foreign one, and that that passion for cheapness is putting on the back of the producers of this country the old man of the deep sea of misery, the “unemployed,” seems painfully certain. The conclusions the writer of the article has arrived at I have taught in and out of season. It has seemed certain to me that the want of employment here must result from our employment of workmen in other countries instead of our own, and also from the fact that we have lost the customers for our commodities, which are now kept by foreign nations for their own workmen by means of tariffs.

But there is one other conclusion which must be faced, and that is that these evils are to be met not by the means we are attempting to employ. State charity will only increase the casual and unoccupied class. I believe the workpeople of this country don't want charity, but do want work. A State which cannot do anything to get work for the people because the means suggested involves the modification of our fiscal system, and a revision of notions as to the freedom of trade which were adopted and applied under different circumstances and different conditions, is not worthy of the

name. It is a system of government which lays itself open to the attacks of the Socialist and Anarchist, who are at any rate on the side of reform. If there is no other way out of the *impasse*, then there is some cogency in the doctrine of a Collectivist Government. There seems to be only two alternatives before us—Tariff Reform or Socialism.

It is true that we have some other suggested remedies, which must be considered. Mr. Carlile, of the Church Army, despairs of doing anything at present in this country to reclaim for "production" the many who are employed "in service," which is, he admits, the way that leads men down into the deplorable class of the "unemployable"; and in his letter to the *Times* he advocates emigration as a cure for the evil. This, however, seems to me a counsel of despair. To suppose that this country cannot, under favourable conditions, produce sufficient in the way of manufactures to purchase all the corn that is required from Canada, seems to me to be absurd. To propose that we should part with our industrious, or would-be industrious, citizens to a foreign country, even to a colony, is like going back to the old days when the medical faculty thought that health was to be regained or maintained by depriving the patient of his life-blood. It is true that the emigration might be a benefit to the colony and even to the Empire by "strengthening the ties of blood and interest between its several portions"; but although that object is excellent, it is too great a sacrifice for the mother country to part with her capable children, especially when we know that the gaps left here by the emigration of our workers would be filled at once, under our present laws, by an equal immigration of undesirable aliens. In that event we would be in a worse plight than we were before. But the advocacy of emigration for the relief of our congestion, which is supposed to result from want of work, is always futile. To suppose

that England must "pay off" her "hands" is to admit the curtailment of our business; it is the putting up of our national shop-shutters, and I am not prepared to admit that we must retire from business, ousted by rivals. But it is a futile remedy in another way. By means of emigration we part with our enterprising, our capable workmen, while we keep the parasitic labourers. Take an illustration. Suppose an employer has a thousand hands, and that his orders fall off; no doubt, in such a case, that might lead to the paying off of hands, to the reduction of business. But would not that very restriction lead to a further curtailment, and the manufacturer who docked his establishment at such a juncture had better, perhaps, shut up shop altogether. What he will try to do if he is a prudent man, a real organiser of labour and captain of industry, will be to secure orders, if not in the old, then in other quarters. He will attempt to regain the command of markets in which he formerly sold, or failing that, he will make connections in other quarters to secure an output equal to what he had in the past. But if that is the true policy for a manufacturer to maintain and advance his productiveness, surely a similar policy would be wise in a nation which is suffering from a similar cause. But while the man would strain every nerve in the direction we have indicated, the statesman sits with folded hands, trusting to Free Trade to do for the nation what he cannot attempt, and failing to recognise that whatever Free Trade did in the past, it is doing nothing but mischief to us now, as every nation in Europe has found out except a numskulled England. But in the case of a nation the policy is more suicidal than in the case of a manufacturer. The latter can pay off his hands and close his mill. England cannot do that: the hands that cannot find work remain to her as her children, claiming to be fed. But worse still, the putting up of our shutters as an industrial nation would mean absolute ruin. We can

only live by our trade. The accumulated capital of the country, which no doubt is considerable, would not suffice to keep the country alive for a couple of years. The services which we render to other nations as bankers or sea carriers, can only be continued so long as we compete with other nations anxious to oust us from these employments, and with the increasing burdens at home that competition must become less and less effective. We must always live by the day's labour, and when our wages are threatened by foreign competition and foreign tariffs, when our policy of free imports is creating a class which has to be fed and supported by those of us who are still producing and still being paid for their produce, the end of the system is in sight.

It is then in this way that some tariff reform is urgently called for. It is, in my view, economically sound, while the means that are being taken to cope with this evil of want of work are, economically and politically, vicious. All I desire to effect by this departure from Free Trade, is the equalisation of the competition between our own labourers and those of foreign countries. I still believe, despite the abuse that is levelled at our workers for their want of technical education, their want of sobriety and the like, that they can hold their own against the workmen of any other country if they have fair play. It is not they that are defective in technical knowledge or in manual skill ; it is our legislators who are defective in political education and in scientific knowledge of economics. If they will learn their lesson, if they will secure the reduction of foreign tariffs, and so make a way for us into foreign markets ; if, failing that, they will keep our own markets free from the subsidised and dumped products of foreign workmen ; if they will further see that new markets like those of our colonies are opened to us, while they are to some extent closed to our rivals,

I, for one, believe that the number of our unemployed will decrease, our workshops will be busy, our wages will rise, and the time for realising a better condition for our labouring classes by means of collective tyranny will be postponed. How are we to achieve that when every manufactured article introduced into the country represents wages paid out of our pockets to foreign workmen? How are we to achieve it when insurmountable tariffs restrict the demand for our products, and therefore restrict the manufacturers' demand for labour? How long will our working men be fobbed off with fine talk about Free Trade and the evils of Protection? Will they not, when the question of the want of work becomes more pressing, as it will, and when our peddling relief works and funds have failed to meet the evil, as they will—will they not demand an experiment in tariff reform, or will they not, perhaps to the astonishment of their Radical friends, demand that the present system of holding property, dividing as it does the capitalist class from the proletariat and giving the capitalist class the right to exact terms from the labourer, shall cease? That something must be done for those who want employment, and cannot obtain it under our present economic system, is certain. The Master of New College, in his letter to the *Times*, called attention to the fact of a very serious gap and deficiency in our educational system. The old system of apprenticeship has gone, and our schools, while they teach elementary education, fail to fit the pupils for the ranks of productive workers. The consequence is that when they leave school they become errand-boys, sellers of newspapers, drivers of vans, or dock labourers—a casual employment which is in the service class, and which produces not serviceable workmen, but on the first untoward turn of fortune's wheel, the unemployed. His idea seems to be that the school should fit them for life, and make workmen of the children. And in this

view he is supported by the authority of Dr. Macnamara. This is all very true, and it has always seemed to me that schools which taught trades would be better schools than those which merely taught children to read and write, even with the addition of those tail feather accomplishments, like music and dancing, which are to be learned at some of our provided seminaries. But the desire to secure active producers by means of our school curriculum, although laudable, would, if carried out, increase the evil of which we have to complain. I think domineering trades unions would have something to say against the fledging of these callow competitors at the expense of the State; but even if they had not, it is obvious from the remedy which Mr. Carlile suggests, that it is fewer, not more, workmen with skill that we want, and his desire to "gut" our markets by emigration would be frustrated if the schools began to overfill them with workmen. But here again we are brought back to the same point. It is more work that we want, and when that was obtained no doubt the technical training of our children would prove an asset instead of an incubus. But the first requisite is to secure employment, and, to my mind, as I have said, the alternatives which our statesmen have to choose between are a rational tariff reform and an irrational Socialism. To-day they have, in my view, a choice; a time will shortly come, when their nostrums—their new Poor Laws, their emigration, and what not—have failed, when they will have none.





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